5 OF 5

PAUL TOBIN

PIOTR KOWALSKI

THE WITCHER®

CURSE OF CROWS

FROM THE STORY TEAM THAT BROUGHT YOU *THE WITCHER 3: WILD HUNT*!

THE WITCHER®

CURSE OF CROWS

5 OF 5

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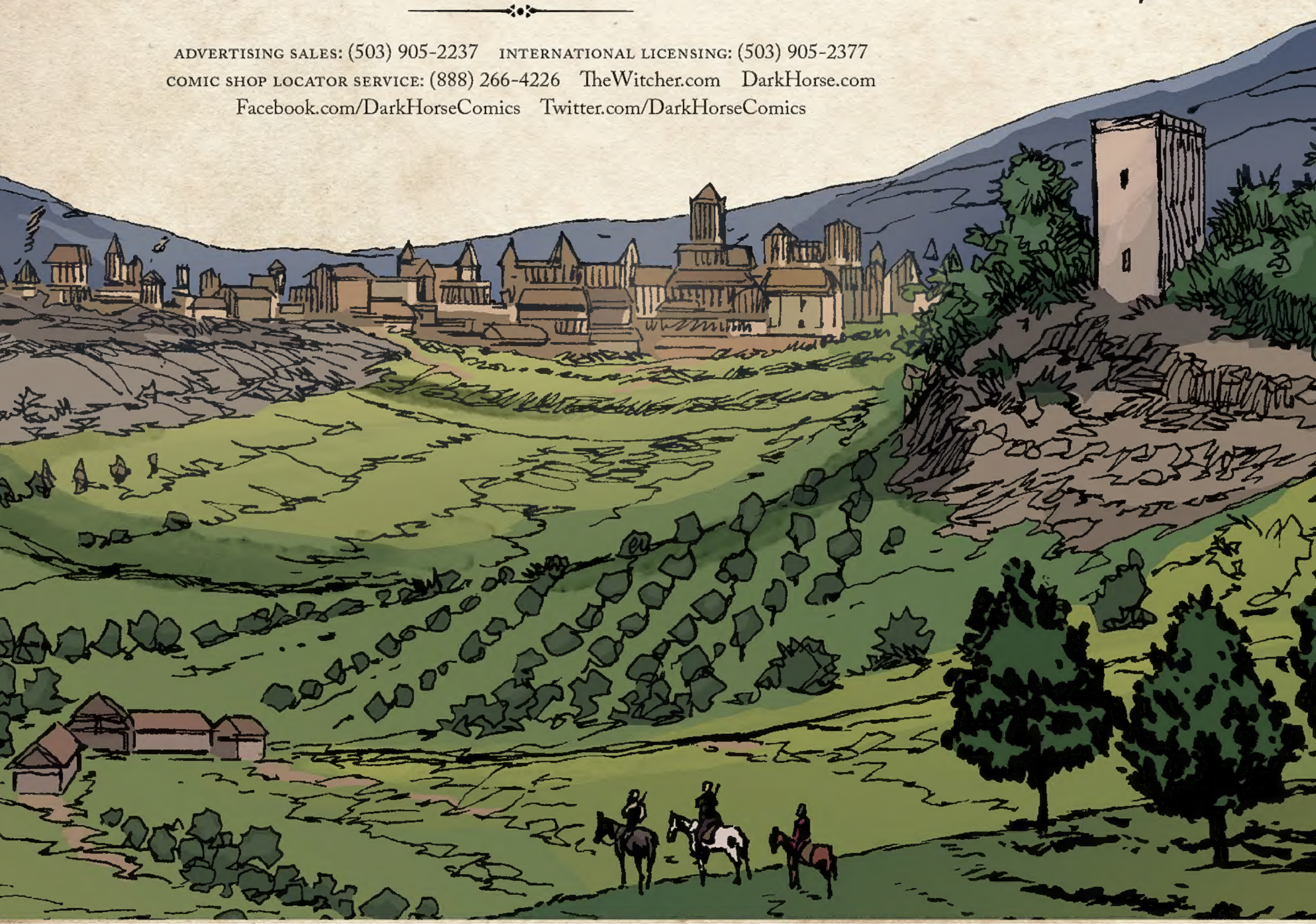

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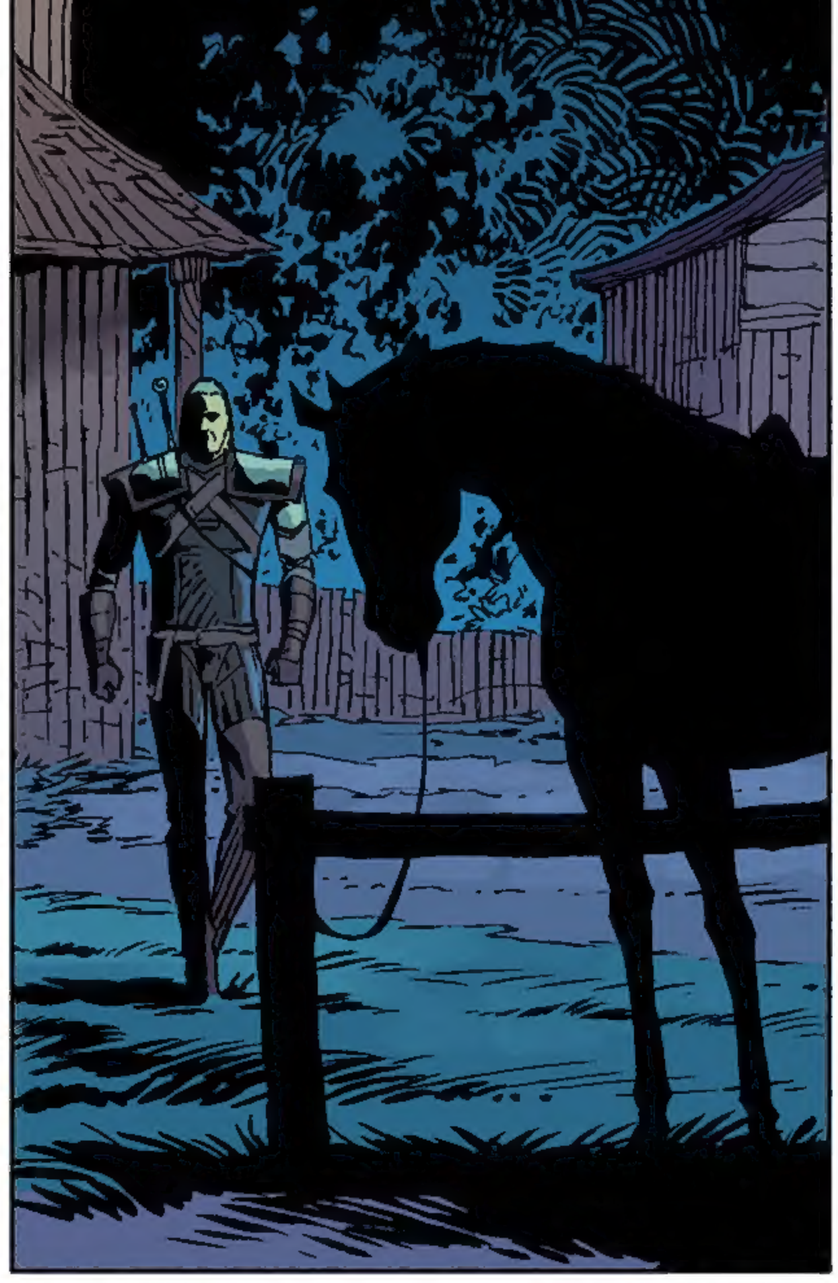
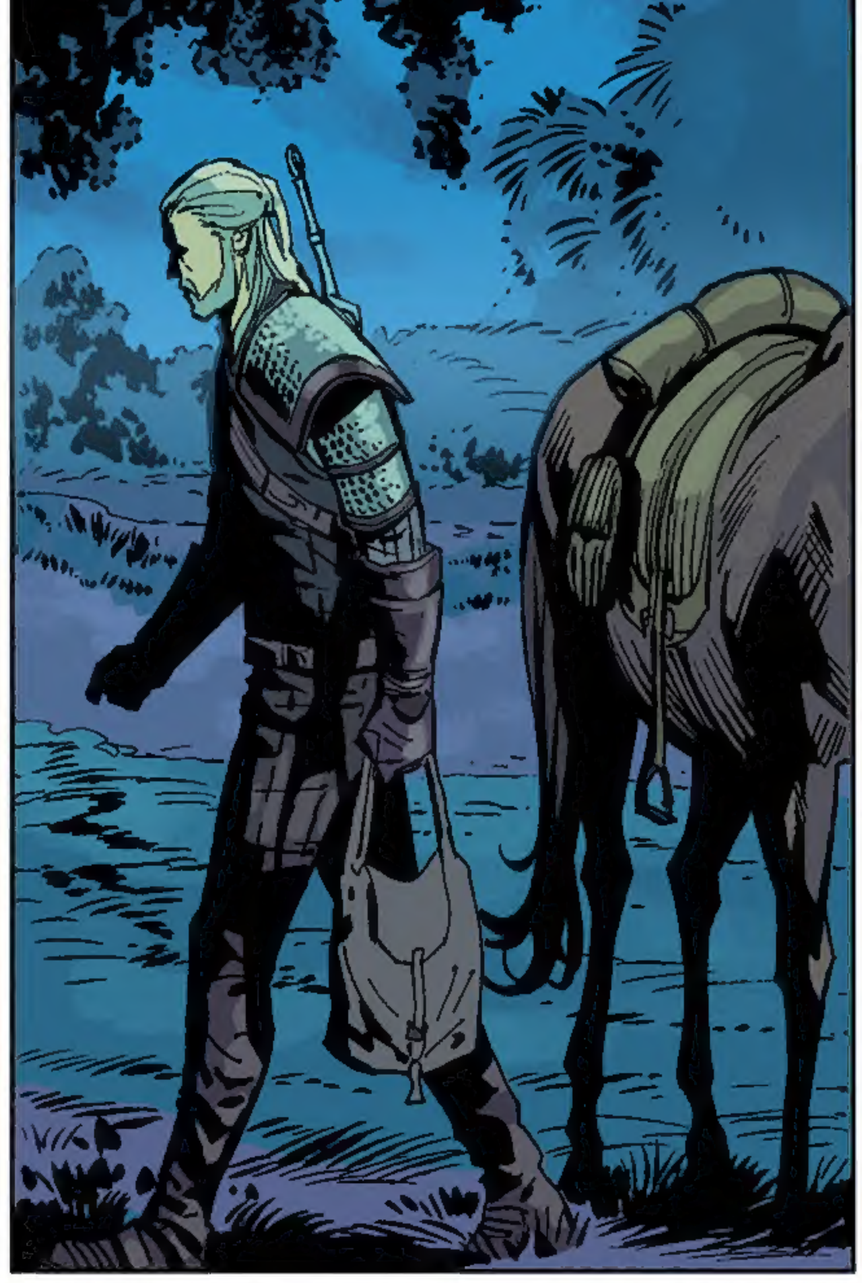
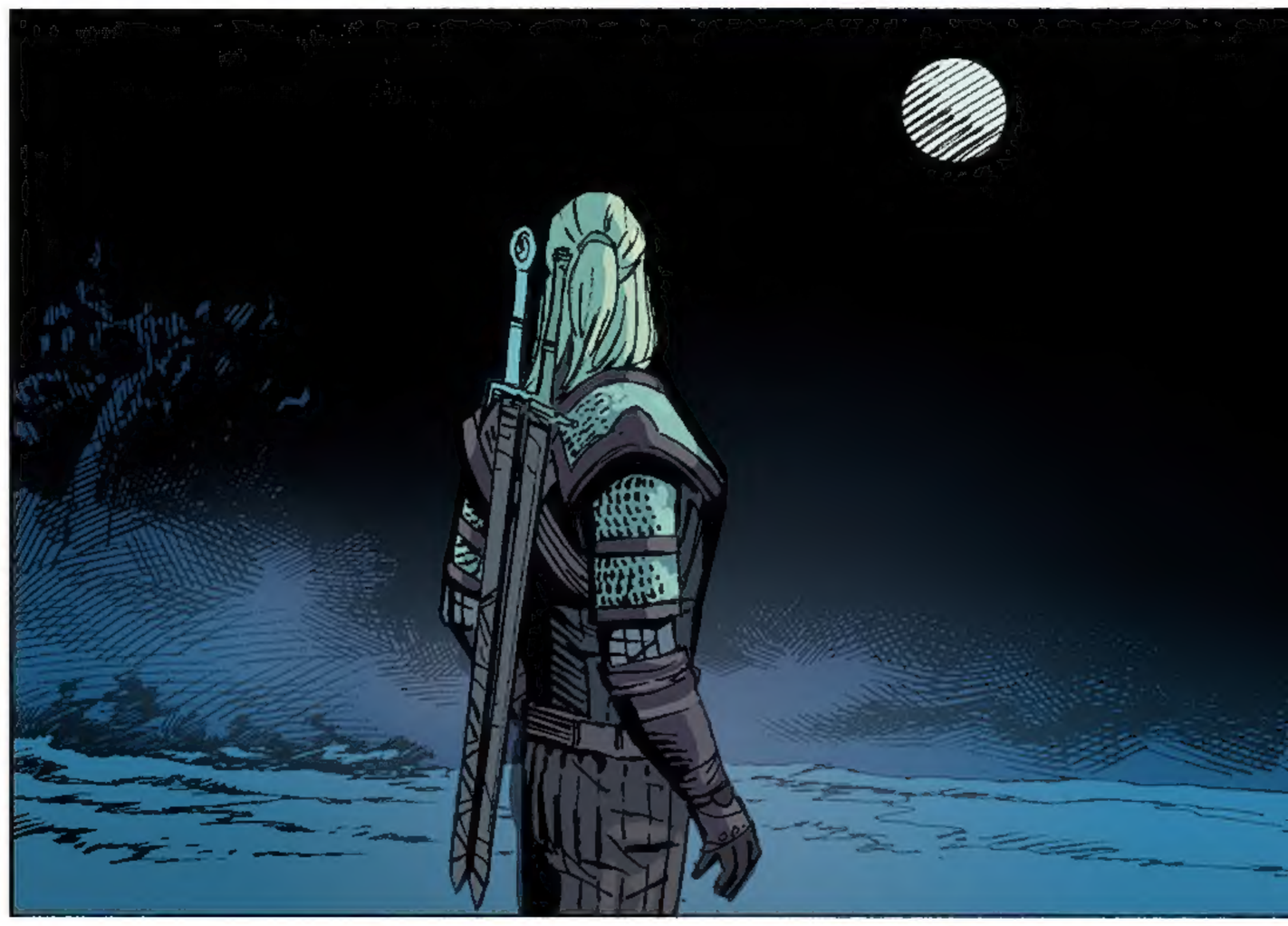
YEP-WRAAAAH-YEP-YEP!
SO? SHE ALIVE?
JUST. I'VE STANCHED HER MOST SERIOUS WOUNDS, THOUGH THE ONE ON HER NECK LOOKS DREADFUL. ROT IS SETTING IN ALREADY--
I'VE NOT SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT BEFORE. GERALT, I HAVEN'T THE STRENGTH TO DO ANY MORE NOW. WE MUST GET HER SOMEWHERE WARM, SAFE.

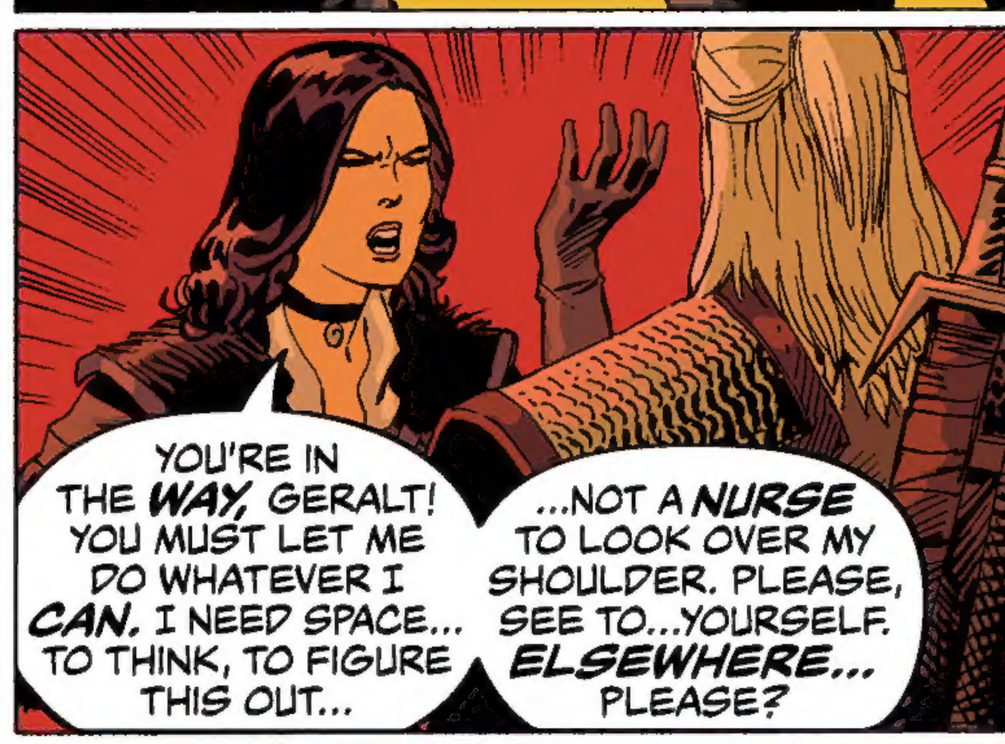
BLAM
A ROOM, HOT WATER, AND AS MUCH CLEAN, BOILED CLOTH AS YOU CAN MUSTER. QUICK.
MY SATCHEL. I NEED MY SATCHEL!







THAT ALL YOU NEED... EVERYTHING?
I... BELIEVE SO.
UGH. THINK YOU CAN HELP HER?
I...MUST THINK, I MUST... THE ROT, I DON'T UNDERSTAND. AND SHE'S FEVERISH, DANGEROUSLY SO, I... UGH.


YOU'RE IN THE WAY, GERALT! YOU MUST LET ME DO WHATEVER I CAN. I NEED SPACE... TO THINK, TO FIGURE THIS OUT...
...NOT A NURSE TO LOOK OVER MY SHOULDER. PLEASE, SEE TO...YOURSELF. ELSEWHERE... PLEASE?

Rann

THAT NIGHT...

ELI! OH... OH MY. YE'RE HURT, ELISA. I DIDN'T KNOW! THE BEAST...I THOUGHT IT WERE...ITS OWN. THAT YOU WERE NOT ONE. I'D NOT HAVE PECKED AT YE IF I'D--
OH, SHUT IT, ELID. CONCERNED, ARE YOU?

AS CONCERNED AS YOU ARE FOR THE WITCHERESS? I TOLD YOU TO STAY AWAY! OF ALL FOLK--WITCHERS! THEY ARE NO FRIENDS TO OUR KIND, AS THEY WERE NOT TO OUR FATHER! AND THE WHITE-HAIRED ONE, HE--

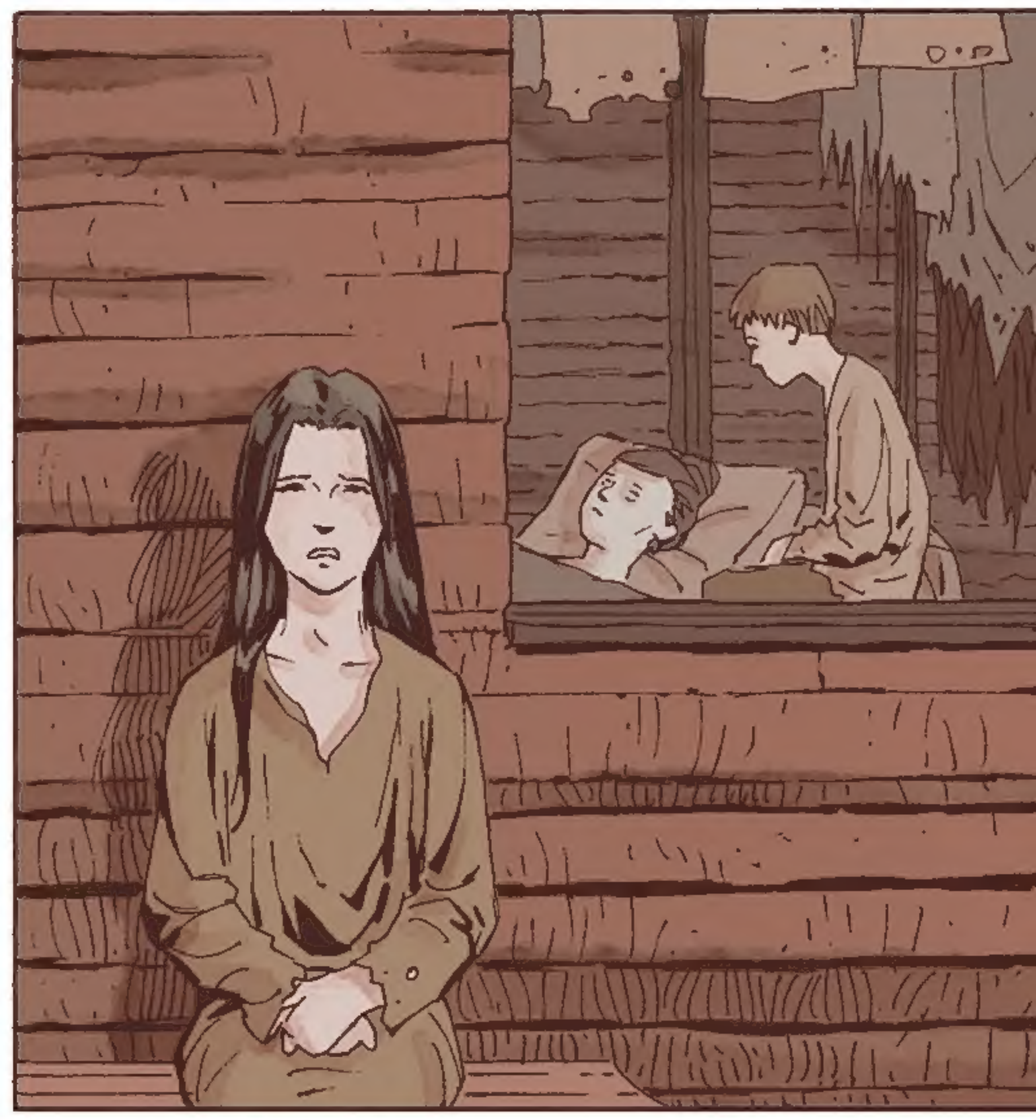
ELI! YE LOOK TO THE DEAD! WHAT DO THEY MATTER?!
HAD OUR FATHER LIVED, OUR LIVES WOULD NEVER'VE TAKEN THIS TURN!

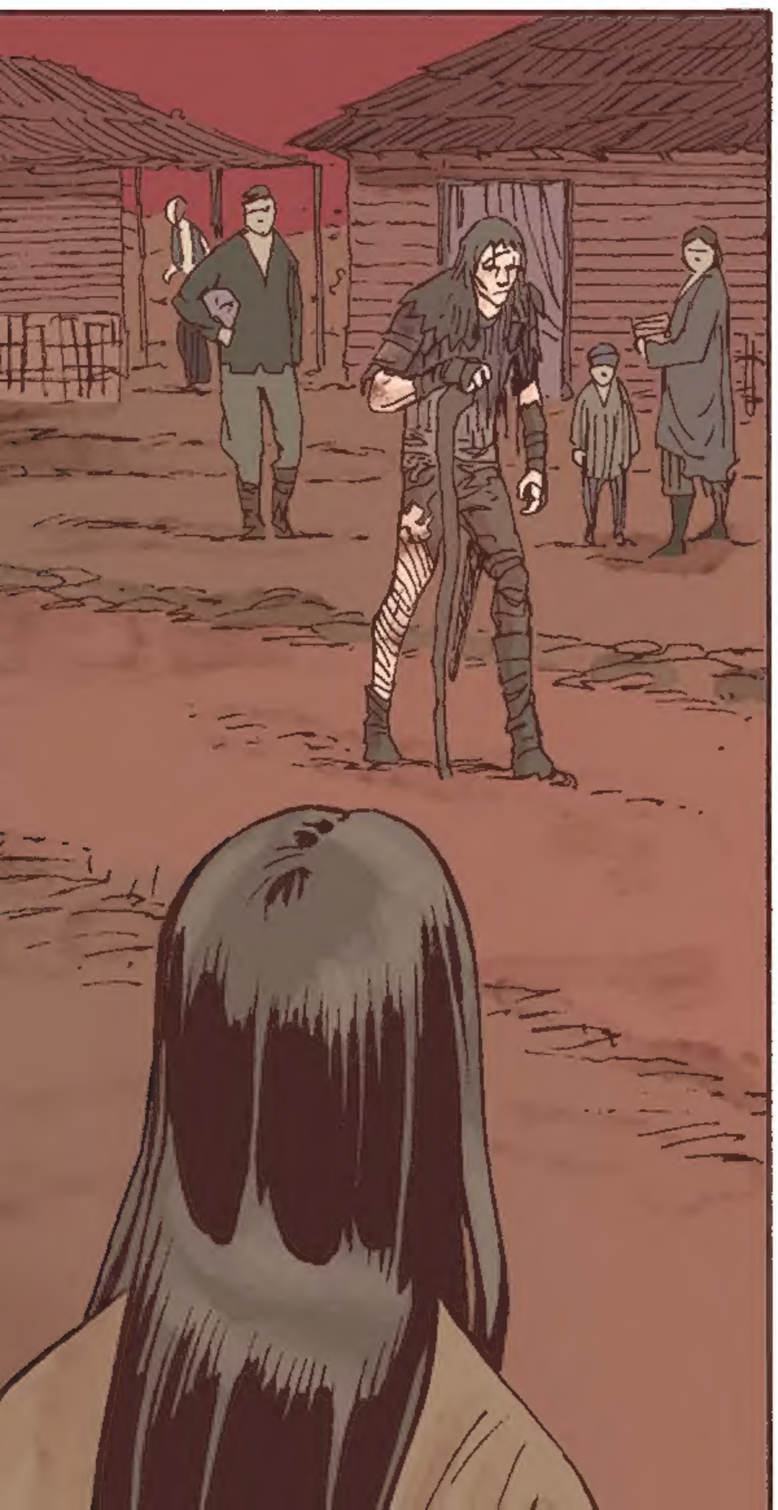
OUR DAD--HE'S MIST, NOW. MIST THAT TOLD ME I'M SMART, THAT TOLD ME TO THINK. AN' I DID, I HAVE. HE DID WRONG, ELI, AND DIED FOR IT. AN' WE DID WRONG, BUT WE NEEDN'T DIE!

STOP! SHUT UP! I'VE NO WISH TO REMEMBER! ANY OF IT!

BUT YE WILL! I'LL MAKE YE! FOLK'RE DYIN' AT YER HAND! ALL 'CAUSE OF YOU, FOR YOU WERE THE ONE TO CHOOSE! YE CHOSE FOR US BOTH!

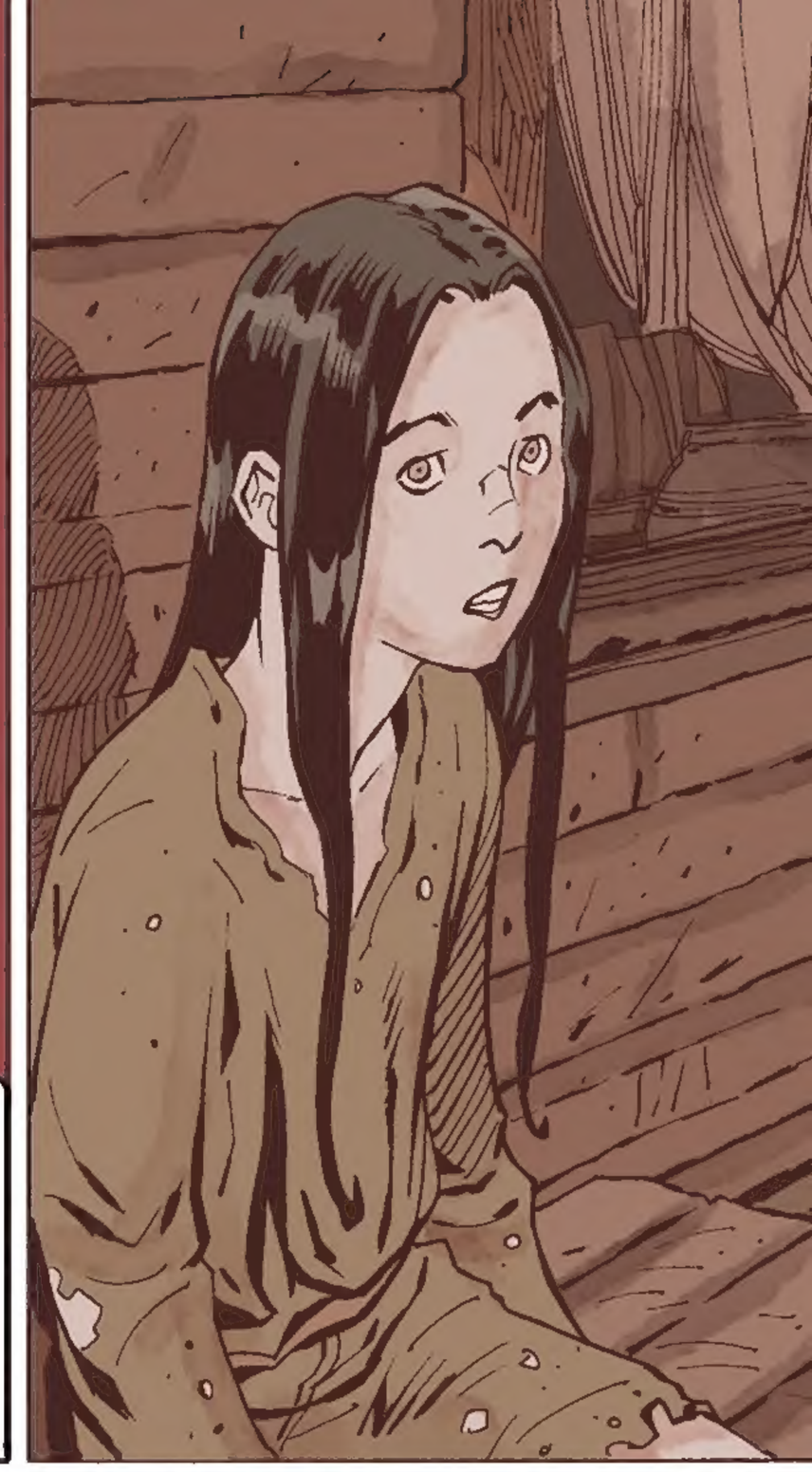
NO MAN'S LAND DURING THE THIRD NILFGAARD WAR, SEVERAL YEARS EARLIER...

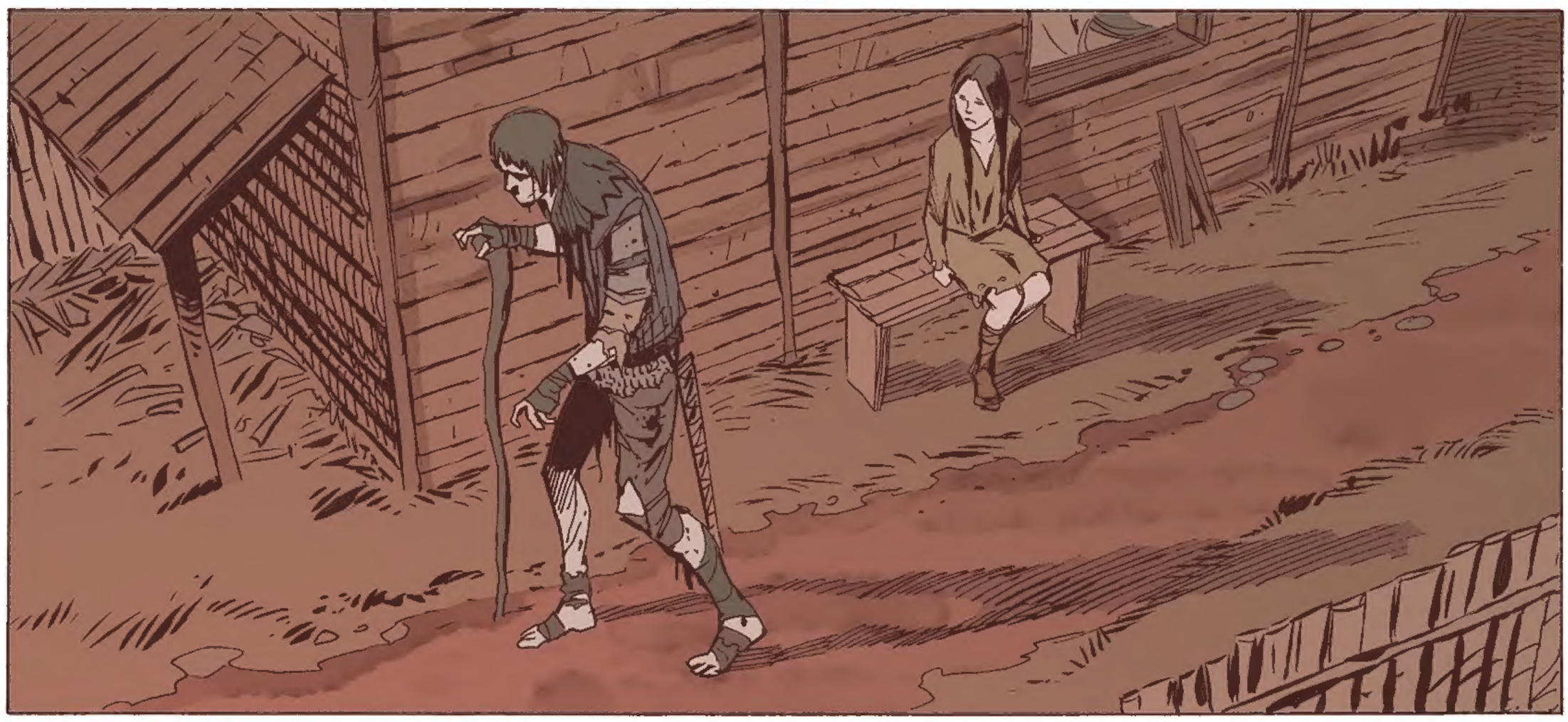




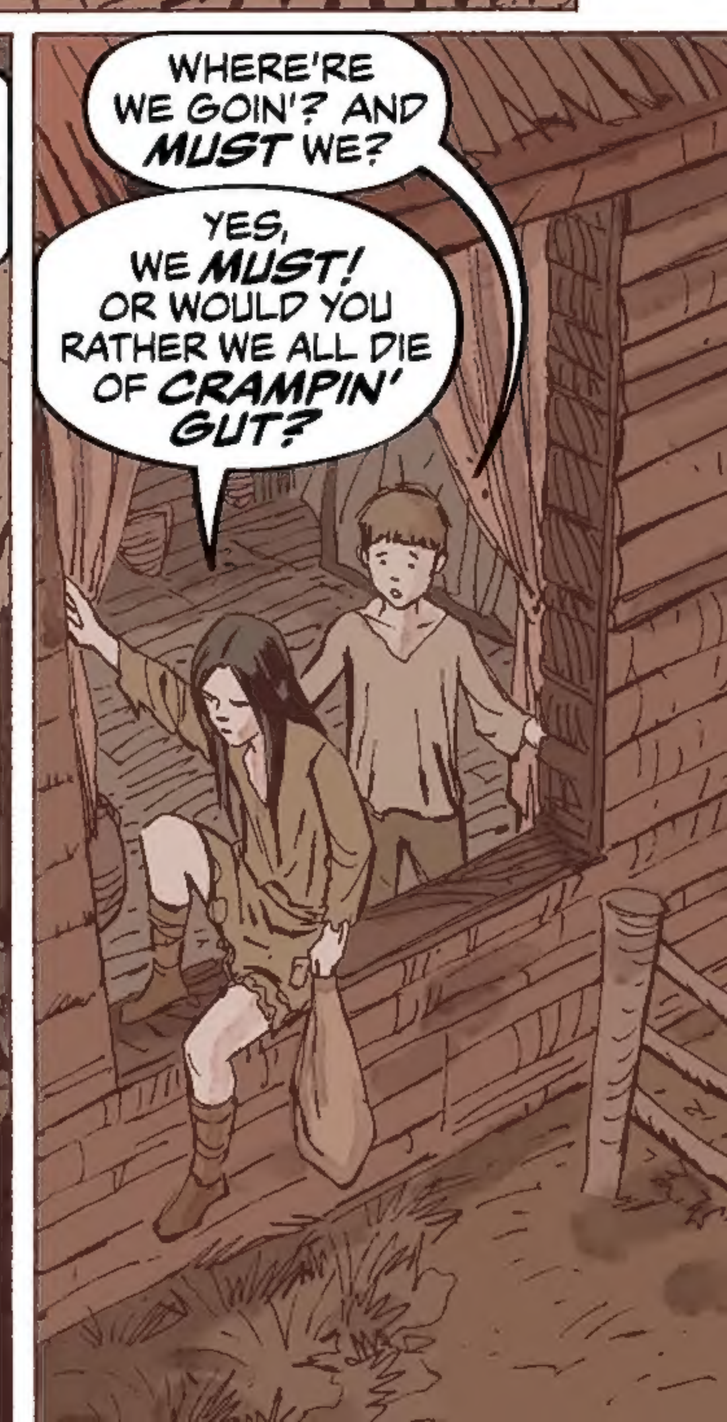
WHERE'VE YOU COME FROM, GOOD MAN?

FROM THE WEST, MISS. I'VE WALKED A LEAGUE, PERHAPS MORE. THREE VALLEYS OVER, THERE WAS A GREAT BATTLE, MANY MEN DIED...





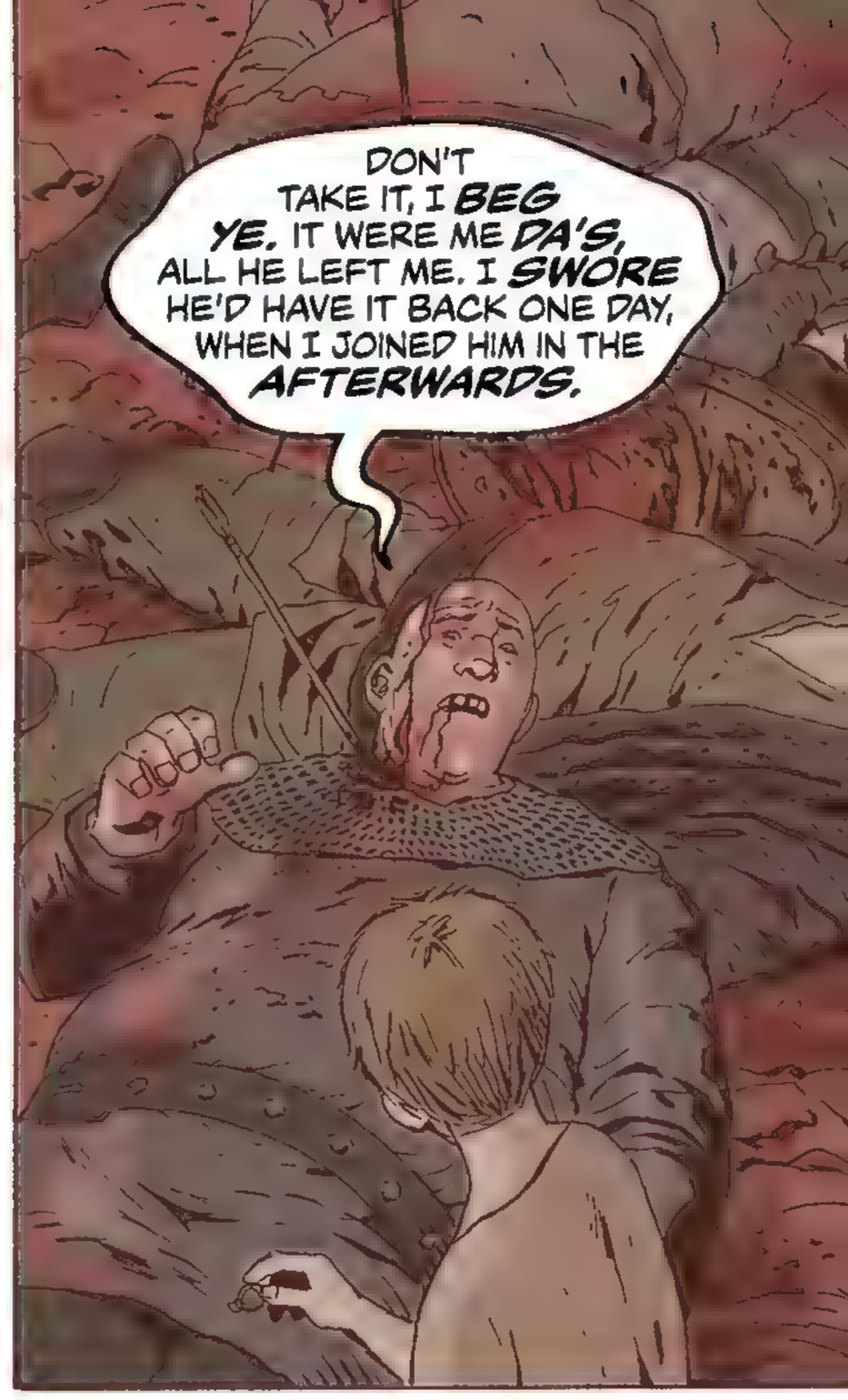
C'MON, ELID. WE'VE GOT TO GO!
BUT... WHERE? AN' LEAVE NAN?
WE'LL BE BACK! NOW STOP ASKIN' QUESTIONS AND FOLLOW ME! WE'VE NOT MUCH TIME!

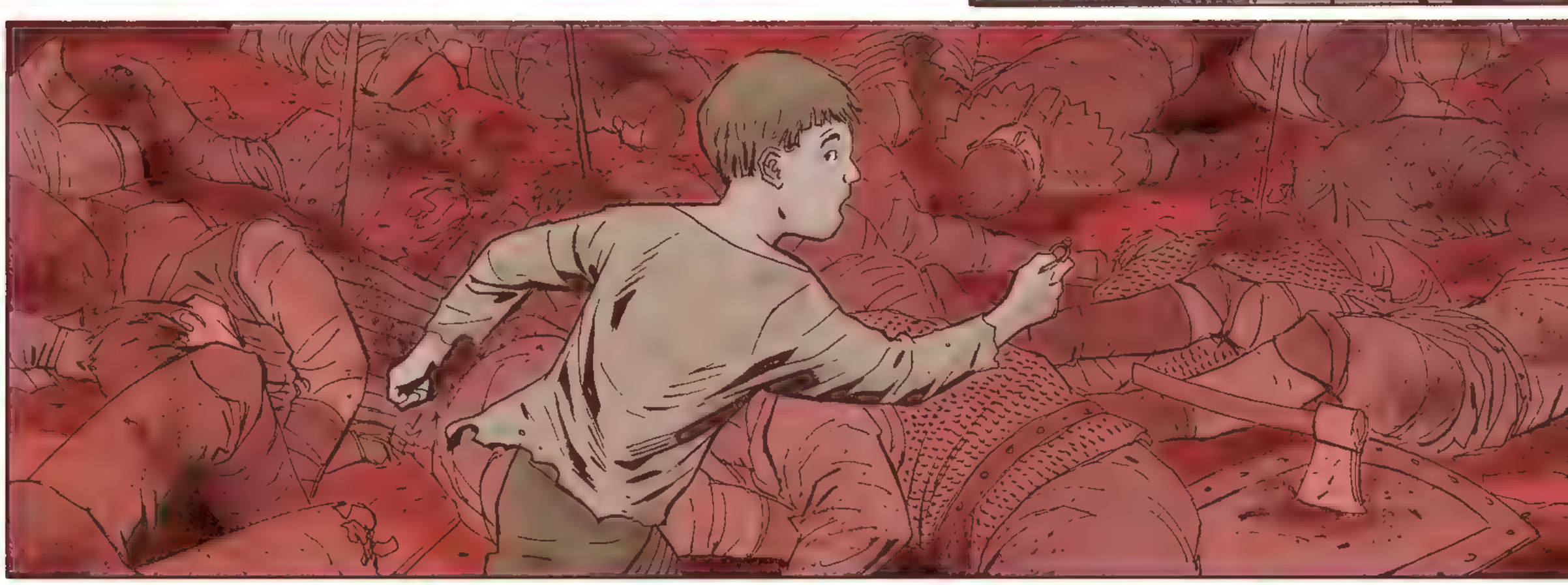

WHERE'RE WE GOIN'? AND MUST WE?
YES, WE MUST! OR WOULD YOU RATHER WE ALL DIE OF CRAMPIN' GUT?

ELI, WAIT FOR ME!

I CAN'T SKIP LIKE THAT! HOW DO YE DO IT?!
IT'S EASY!
HAHA! HEHEHEH!

NO! I DON'T WANNA! I'M AFEARD, ELI! THERE'S GHOSTS OUT THERE!
BOLLOCKS! THERE'S NO GHOSTS NOW, BUT THERE'LL BE BEASTS COME NIGHT. C'MON! WE'VE GOT TO BE GONE BY SUNDOWN!


DON'T TAKE IT, I BEG YE. IT WERE ME DA'S, ALL HE LEFT ME. I SWORE HE'D HAVE IT BACK ONE DAY, WHEN I JOINED HIM IN THE AFTERWARDS.



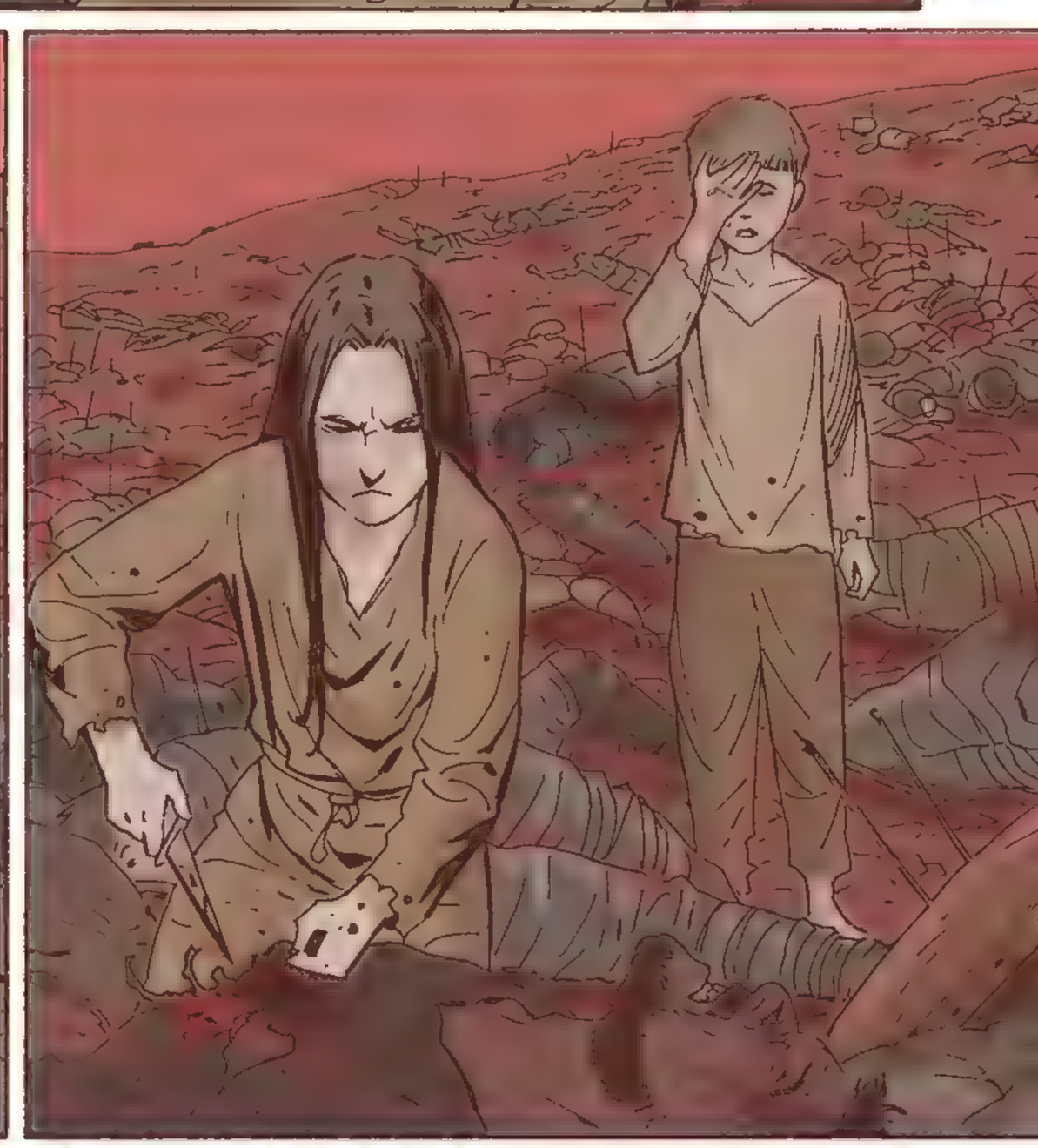
I'VE A COUPLE GOLD TEETH...I THINK THEY'RE GOLD...AND AN ALTOGETHER SOLID PAIR OF BOOTS. NOTHIN' TO EAT, I FEAR. YOU FIND ANYTHIN'?

AYE. BUT I ALREADY ATE IT...

WHERE'S YOUR HEART, ELID? WHERE'S YOUR HEAD? YOU'RE THICK! ALWAYS HAVE BEEN!
WHAT'M I TO EAT?! WHAT OF YOUR BELOVED NAN?

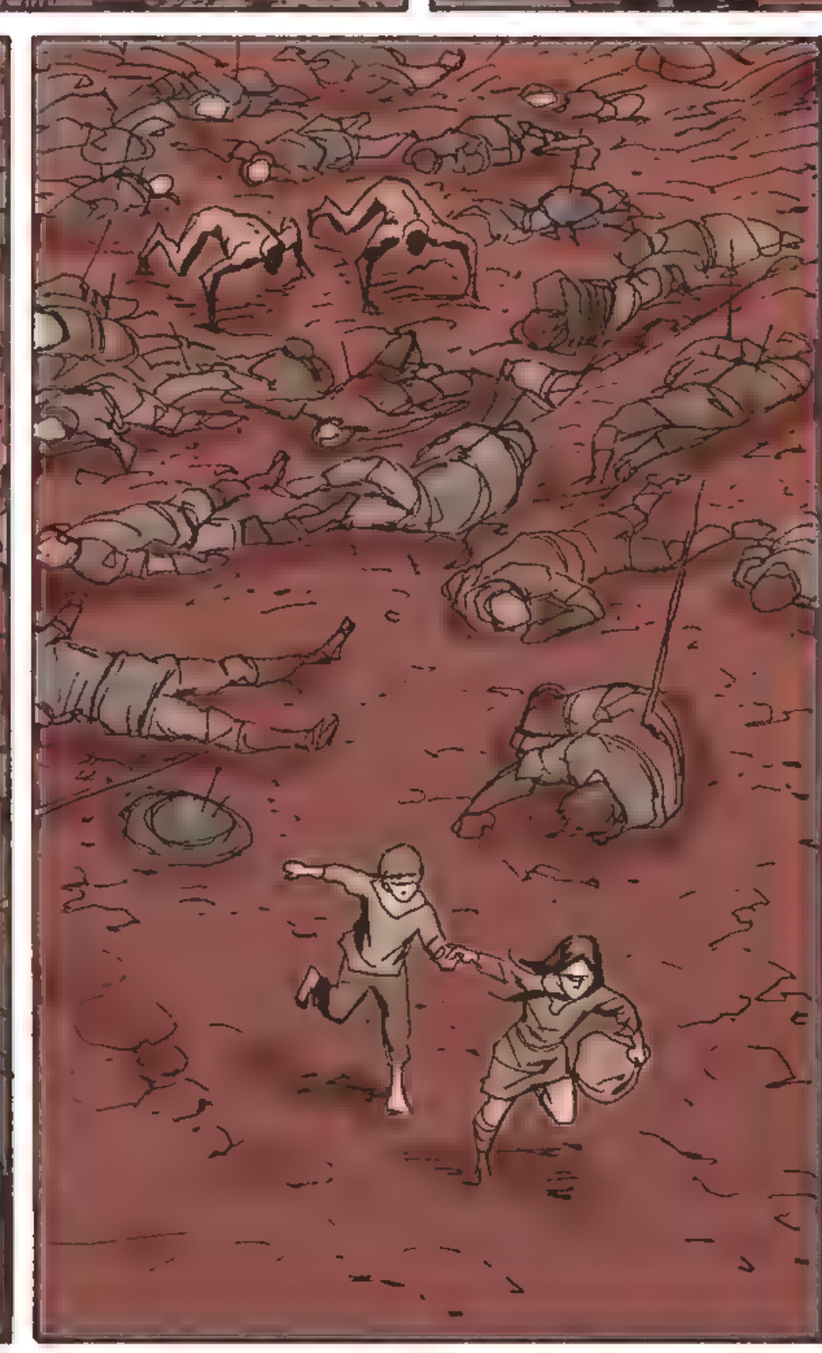
OOOHH ÷SNIFF SNIFF÷
COULDN'T HELP IT. I WERE HUNGRY.

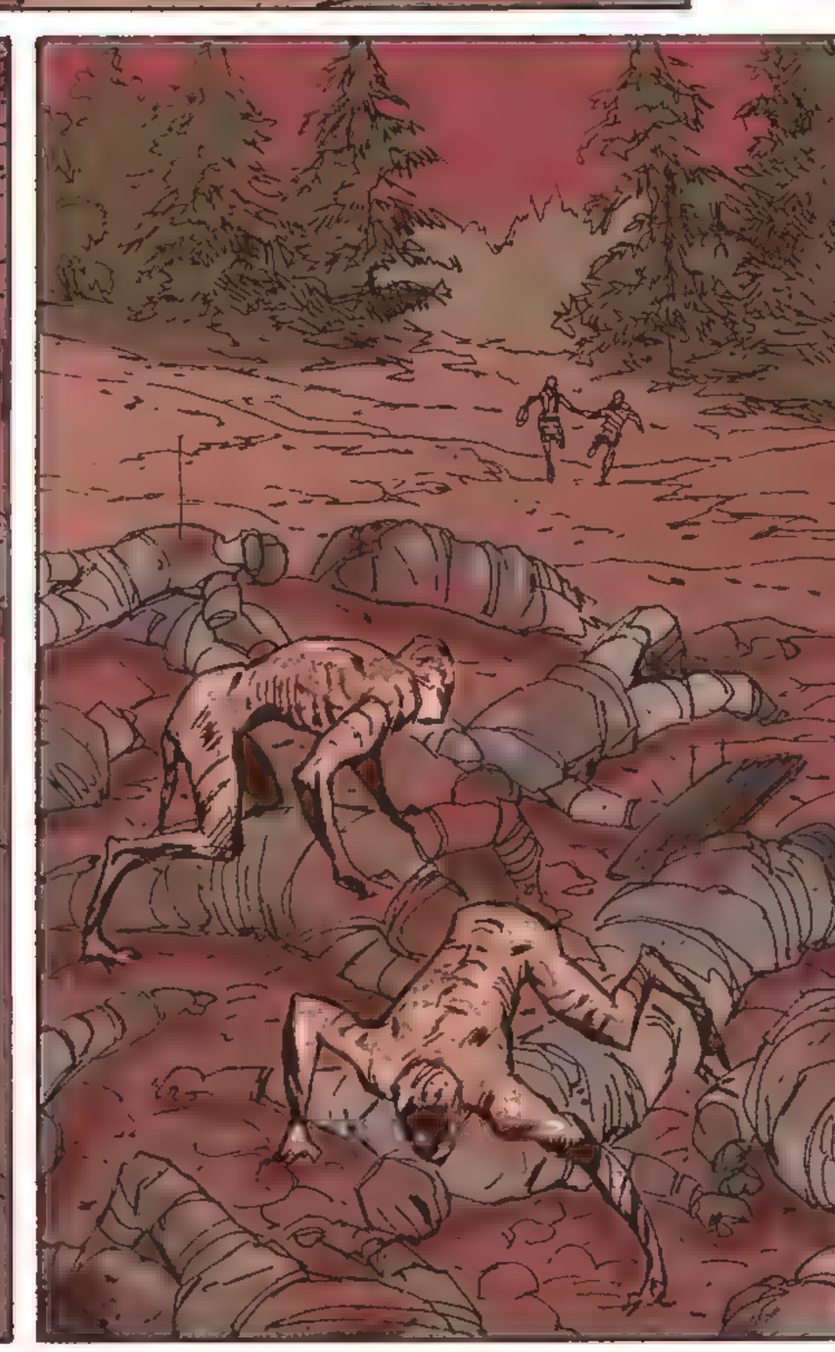
WHAT'RE YOU DOIN'?!
I'M HUNGRY! AND HE SURE AS HELL DOESN'T GIVE A DAMN ANYMORE!



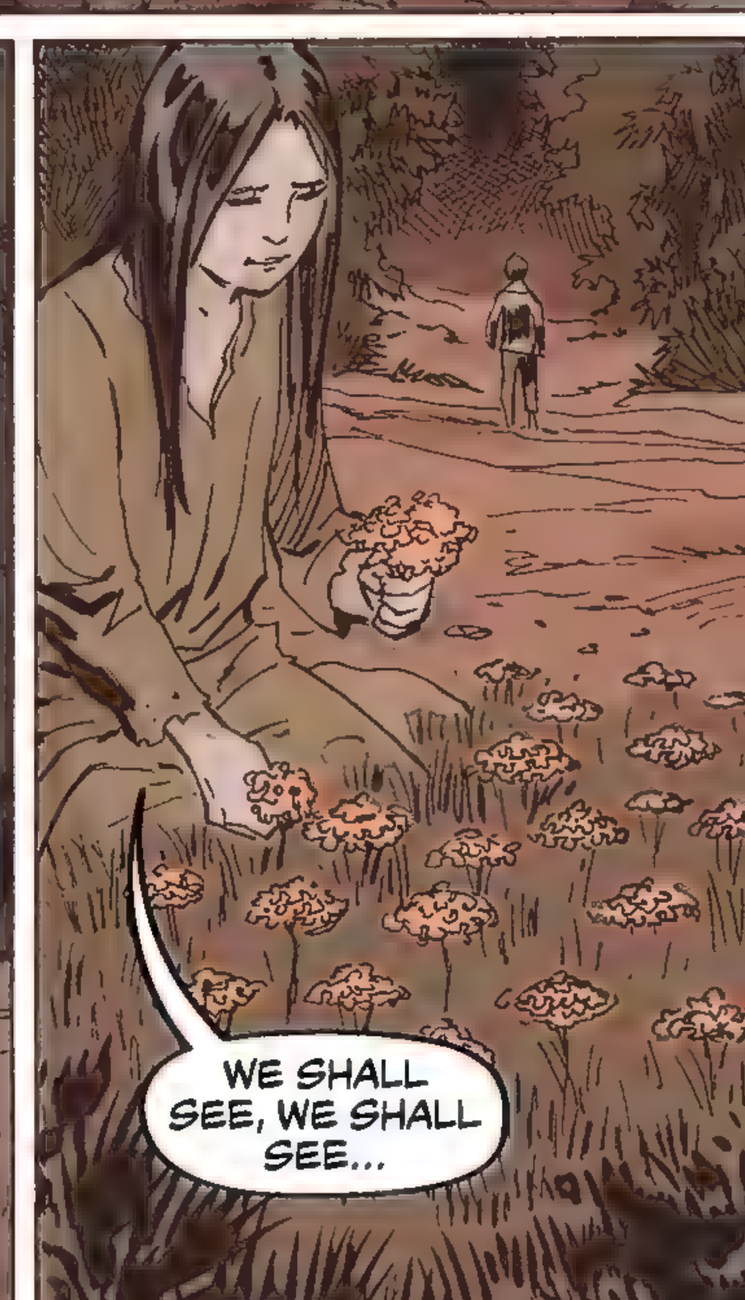
WE'D BEST BE ON OUR WAY...

JUST NEED SOMETHIN' TO *TAKE HOME* WITH US.

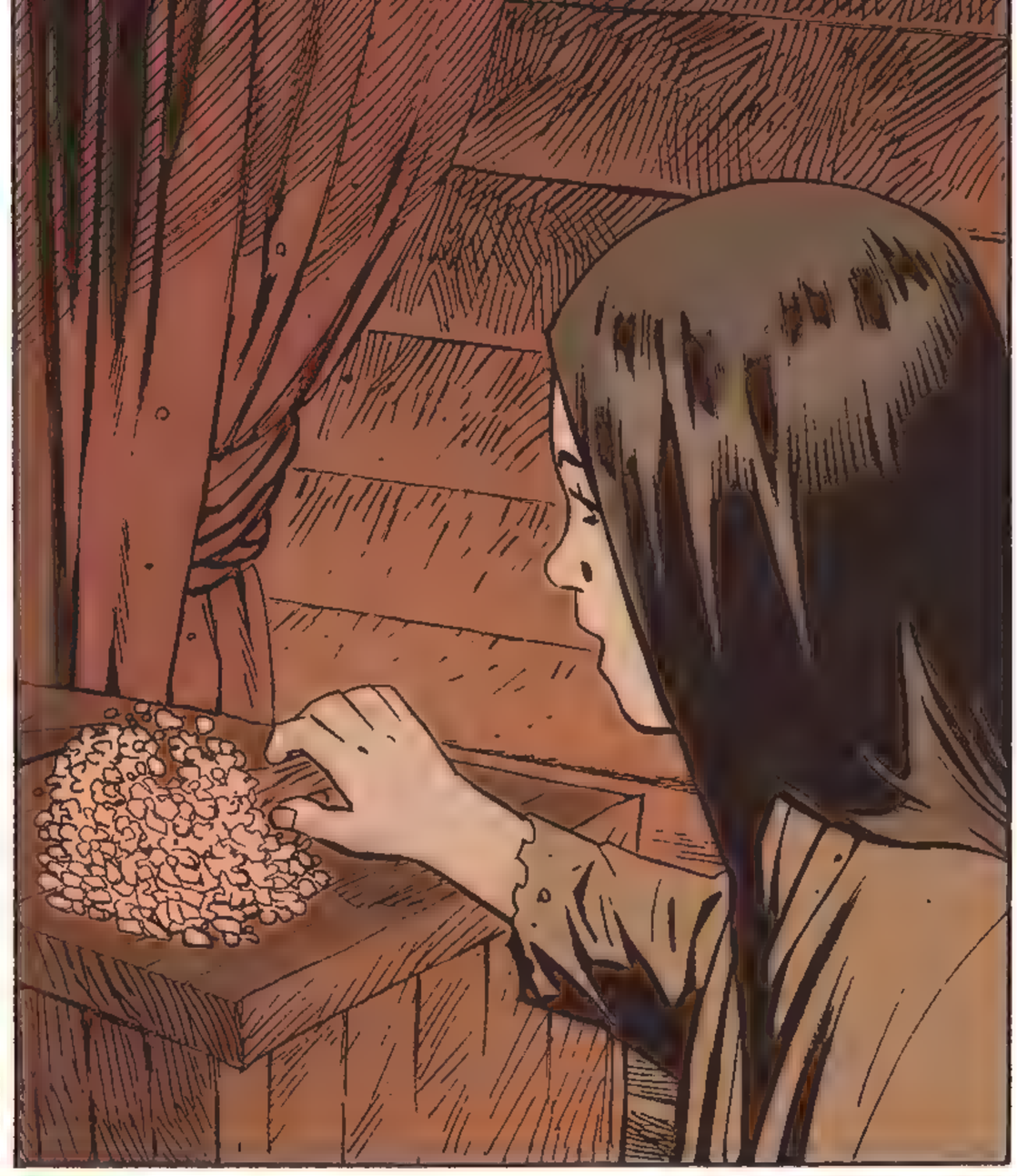




NOW, ELID... WHAT'VE I GOT IN THE SACK?
I DUNNO. I DON'T *WISH* TO KNOW, ELI.
THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH. NO, THAT'S *VERY* GOOD.
BUT I'LL NOT *TOUCH* IT, NOR *SMELL* IT, NOR *EAT* OF IT...

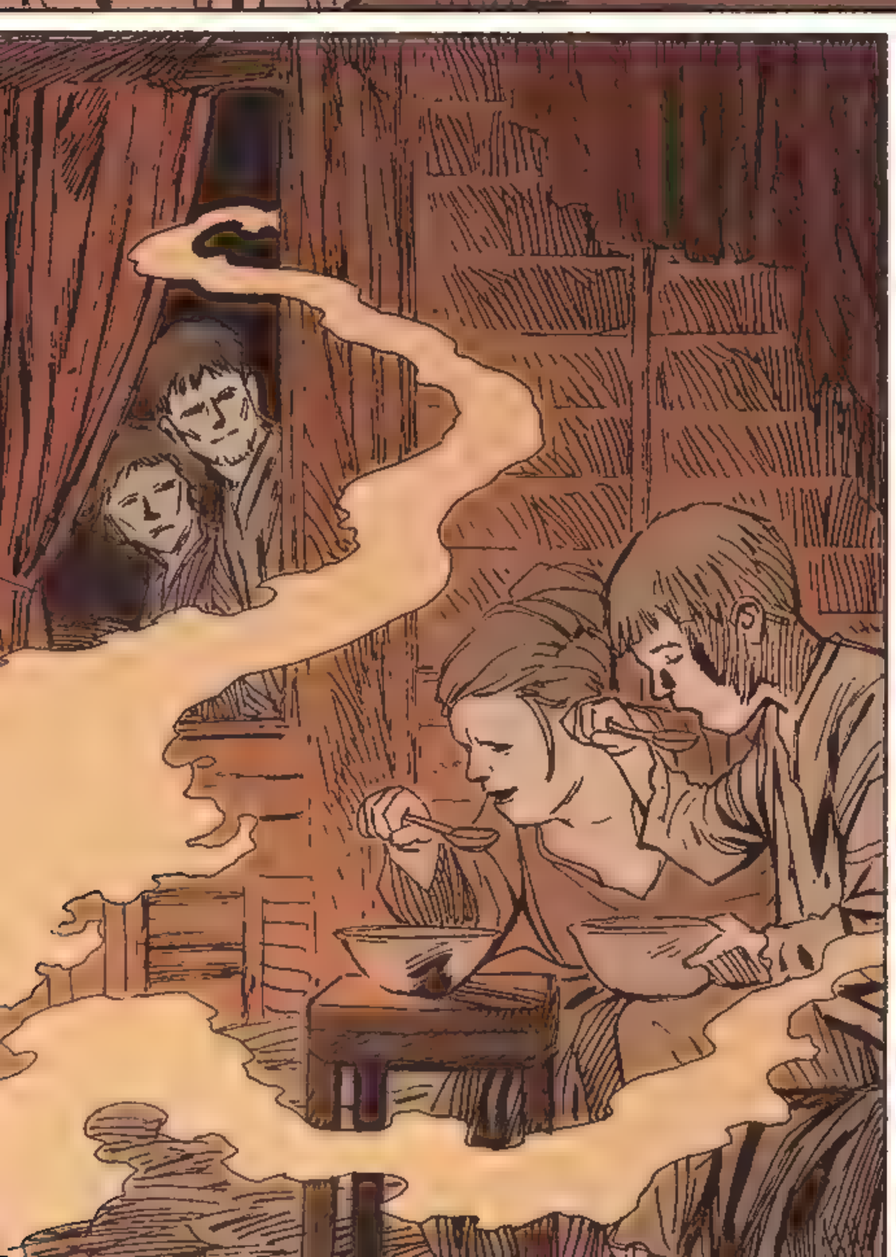

WE SHALL SEE, WE SHALL SEE...

LATER THAT EVENING...
OH, IT'S A RIGHT THICK STEW. NEEDS JUST ONE FINAL TOUCH.

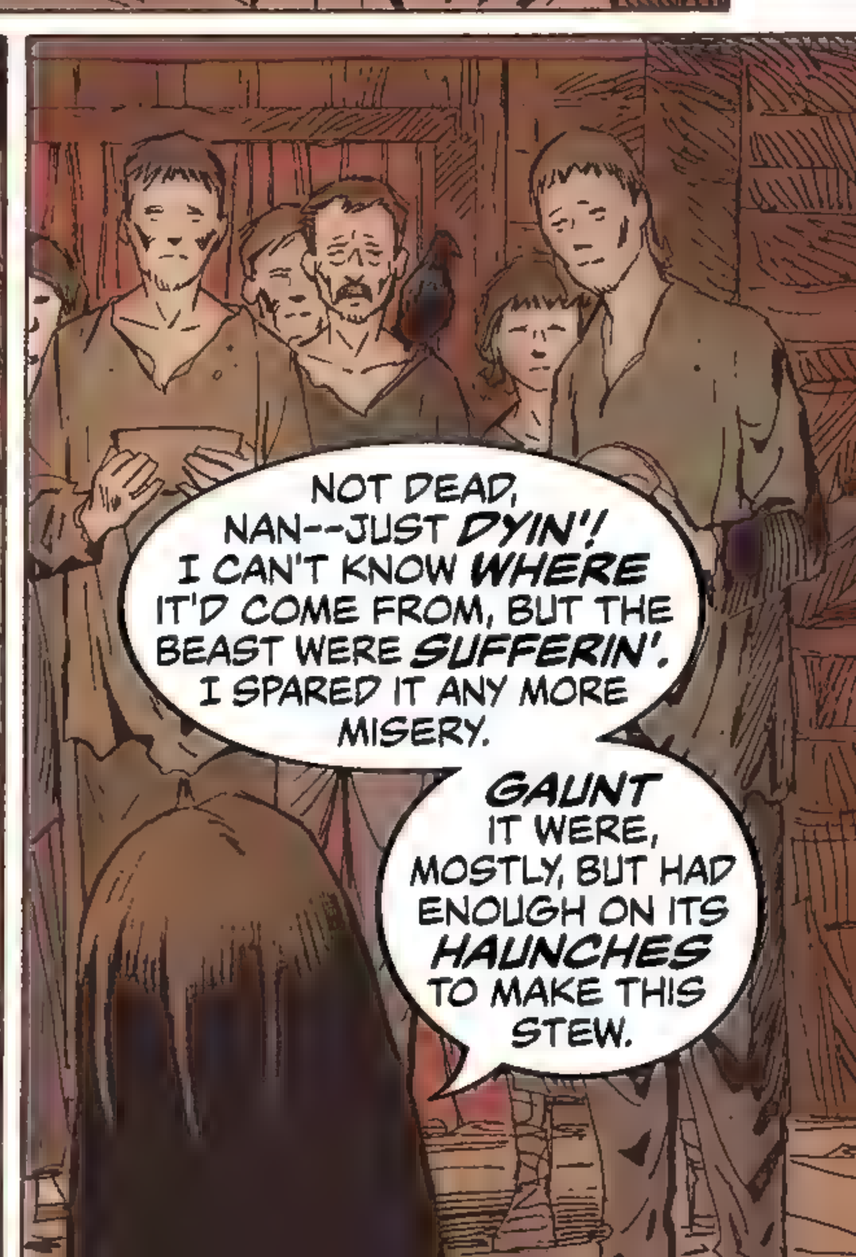


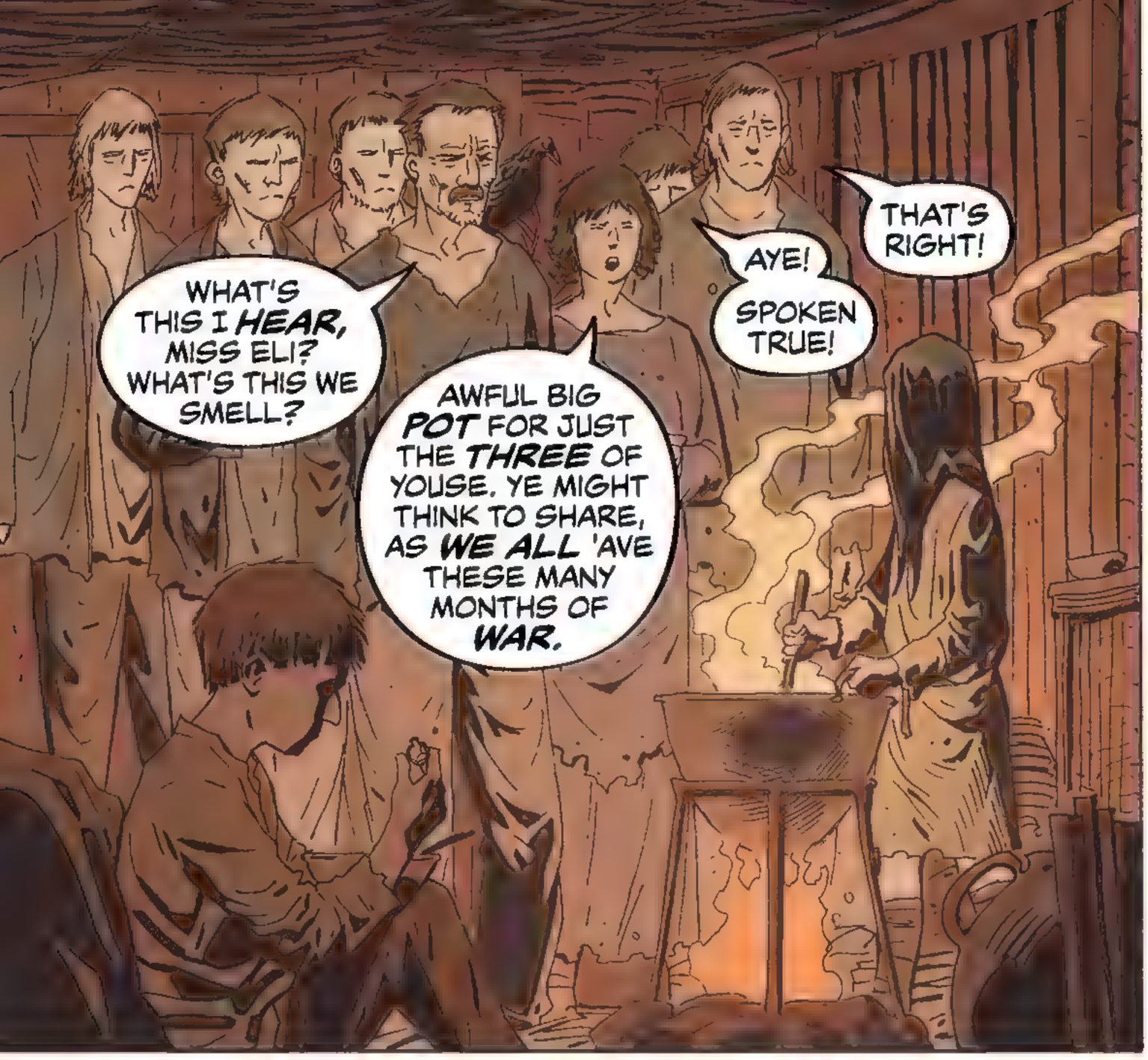
OH, NAN, WE'VE NOT ATE NOTHIN' SO HEARTY IN WEEKS!

WHEN I SAW THAT HORSE, IT PAINED ME TO SEE HOW DEEP THE ANIMAL WAS SUFFERIN'! I HAD TO HELP IT, I'D NOT 'AVE FORGIVEN MYSELF ELSEWISE!
JUST GOES TO SHOW FATE'S MUCH MORE LIKE TO REWARD YOU FOR HELPIN' OTHERS, EVEN THE DUMB BEASTIES!



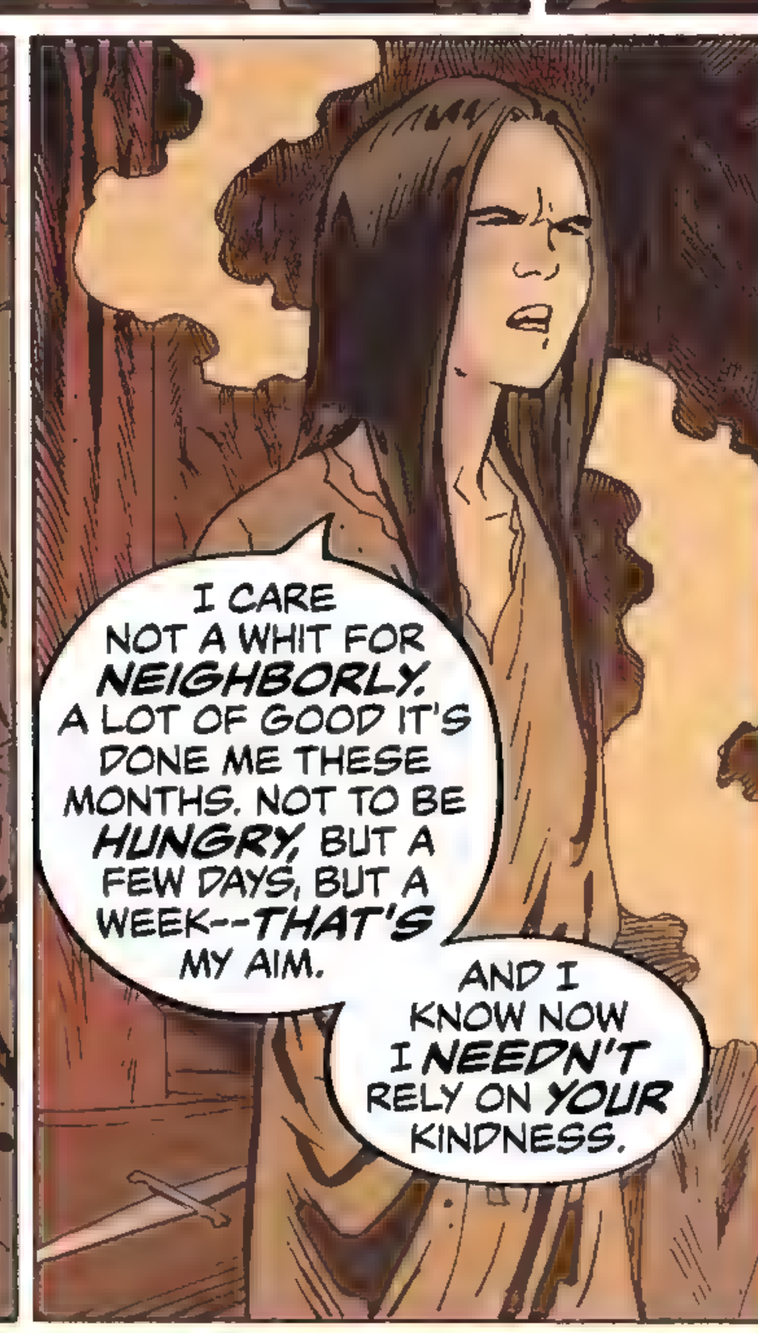
WHAT'RE YE COOKIN' UP THERE, MISS ELISA? MIGHTY FINE SMELL COMIN' FROM YER POT. WHERE'D YE GET THE VITTLES TO FILL IT?
ELI FOUND A DEAD HORSE!

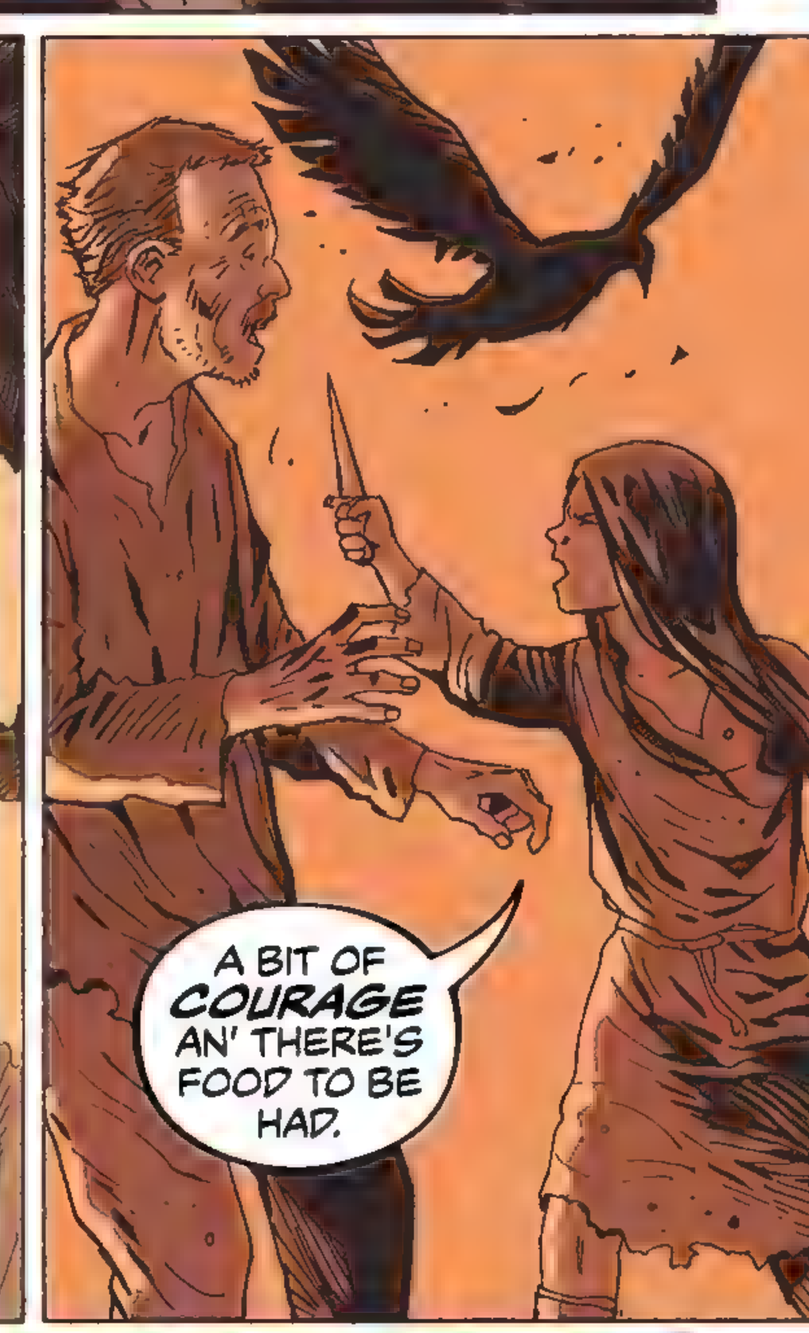

NOT DEAD, NAN--JUST DYIN'! I CAN'T KNOW WHERE IT'D COME FROM, BUT THE BEAST WERE SUFFERIN'. I SPARED IT ANY MORE MISERY.
GAUNT IT WERE, MOSTLY, BUT HAD ENOUGH ON ITS HAUNCHES TO MAKE THIS STEW.


WHAT'S THIS I HEAR, MISS ELI? WHAT'S THIS WE SMELL?
AWFUL BIG POT FOR JUST THE THREE OF YOUSE. YE MIGHT THINK TO SHARE, AS WE ALL 'AVE THESE MANY MONTHS OF WAR.
AYE!
SPOKEN TRUE!
THAT'S RIGHT!

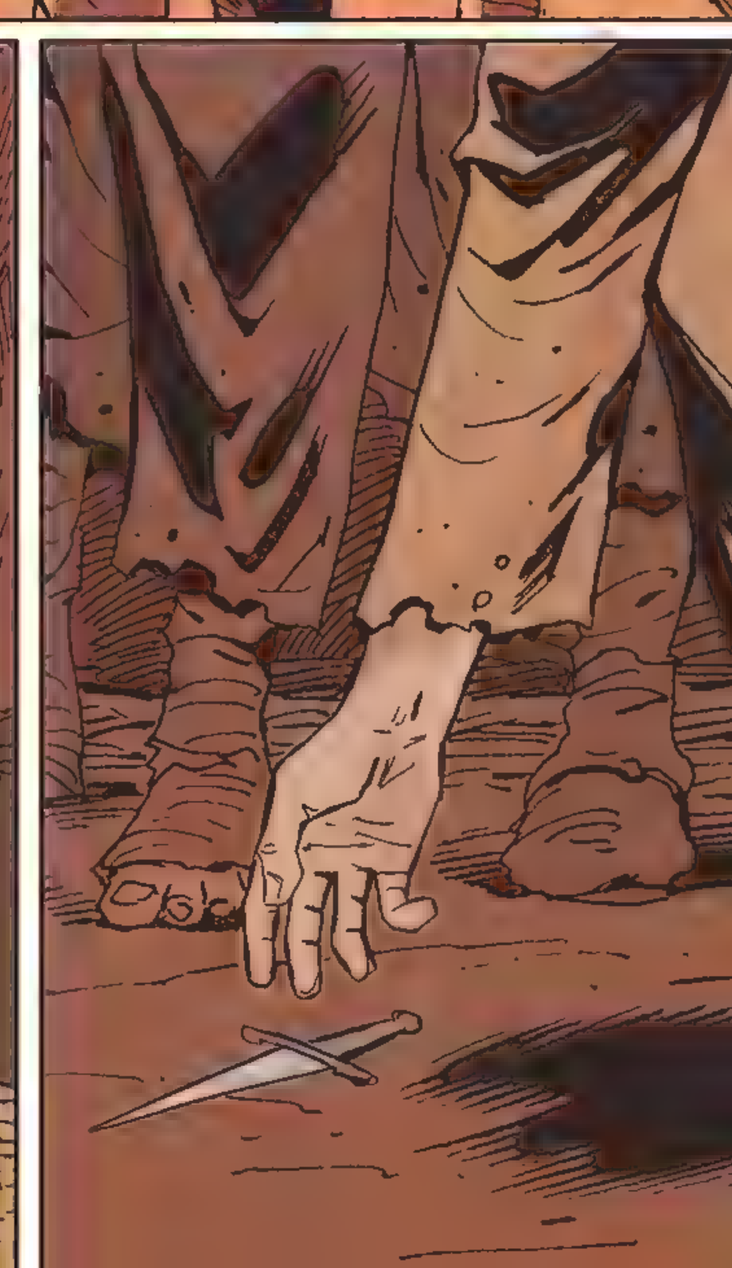
AYE, YOU SHARED. A HANDFUL OF TURNIPS, WORMY POTATOES, CABBAGE LEAVES HALF EATEN BY ROT. NEVER THE RABBITS YOU SNARED NOR THE DOGS YOU SLEW TO FILL YOUR OWN BELLIES.
WELL, THIS DAY I FINALLY WENT A HUNTIN'. AND WHAT I BROUGHT BACK IS MINE, MINE AND MY KIN'S ALONE.

A HUNTIN', SHE SAYS. HAH! WE HEARD YE CLEAR, LASS. AN AILIN' HORSE YE FOUND AND SLEW. THAT WERE NO DANGER TO YE.
COME, NOW, MISS ELI. WE'RE ALL OF ONE LOT. WE'VE KNOWED EACH OTHER LONG, LIVED BESIDE YOUR NAN MANY YEARS. NOT TO SHARE IN YER GOOD FORTUNE, WHY... 'TAIN'T NEIGHBORLY!


I CARE NOT A WHIT FOR NEIGHBORLY. A LOT OF GOOD IT'S DONE ME THESE MONTHS. NOT TO BE HUNGRY, BUT A FEW DAYS, BUT A WEEK--THAT'S MY AIM.
AND I KNOW NOW I NEEDN'T RELY ON YOUR KINDNESS.


A BIT OF COURAGE AN' THERE'S FOOD TO BE HAD.

THAT'S MINE! I FOUND IT!



AND THE *BLADE*, THE DAGGER--DID YE FIND THAT, TOO?

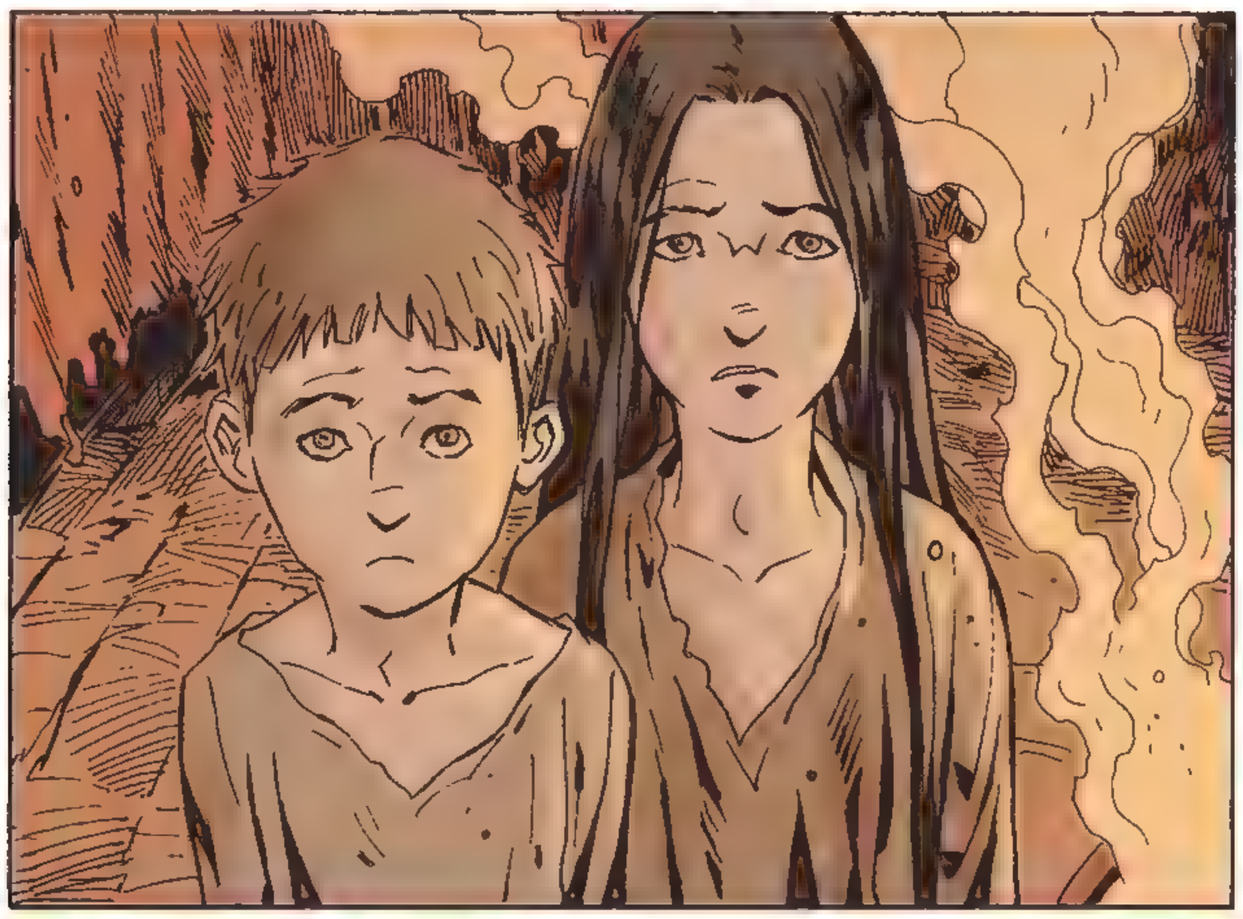
NAY, LITTLE 'UNS. YE'VE BEEN WHERE YE *SHOULDN'T* 'AVE GONE. A PLACE WHERE MEN WENT AT EACH OTHER WITH *HATRED* IN THEIR GUTS AND *RAGE* IN THEIR 'EARTS.

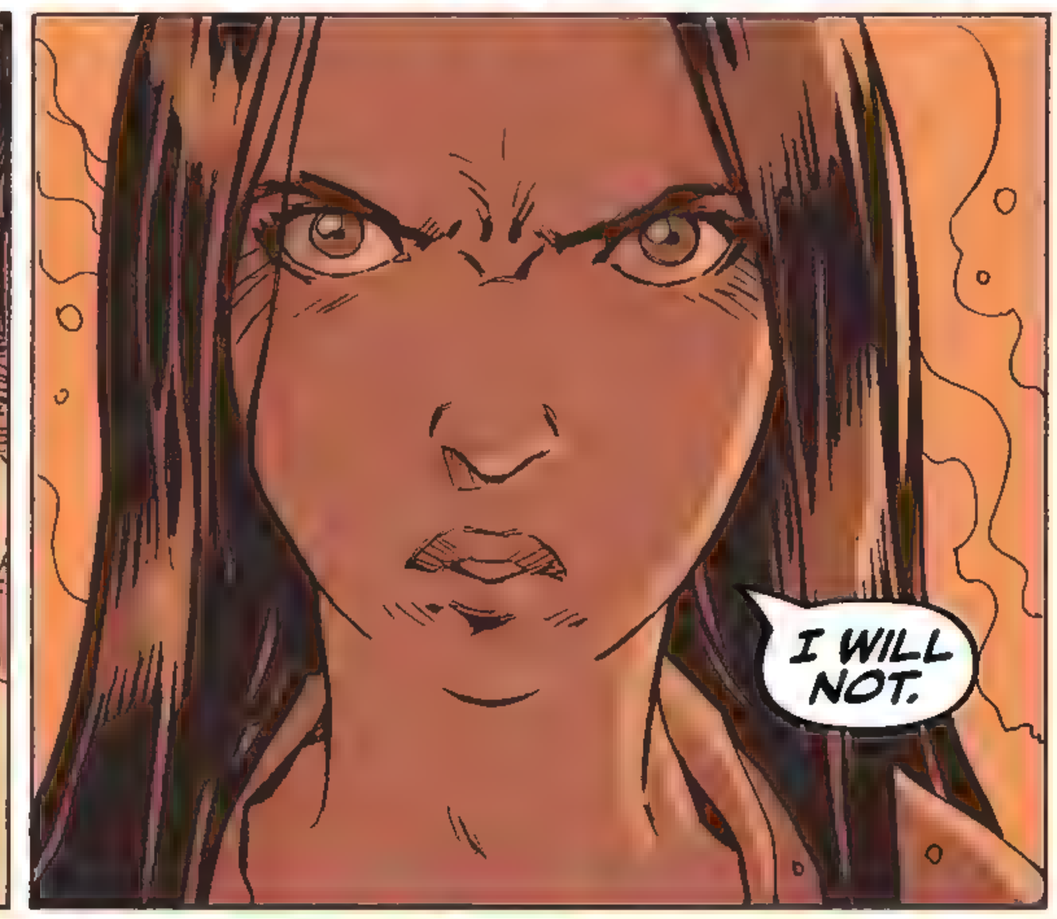
YE'VE WALKED 'MIDST THE *DEAD*, TAKEN FROM THEM WHAT--

NO! HE WERE *ALIVE* WHEN I TOOK IT!

AHEM... WHAT WAS *THEIRS* TO TAKE INTO THE *AFTERWARDS*, AND SOLELY WITH A MIND TO YER *OWN GAIN*, TO FILLIN' YER *OWN STOMACHS*.

IT'S A *DARK BURDEN* YE BEAR, LITTLE 'UNS. A BURDEN TO *DISPEL* BY SHARIN' WITH THOSE IN NEED WHAT YE TOOK SO WRONGFULLY.





YOU'LL GIVE THOSE *BACK*. YOU'LL GIVE 'EM BACK OR THAT *BLACK BUNCH* OF FEATHERS ON YOUR SHOULDER'LL BE IN THE NEXT STEW I MAKE.

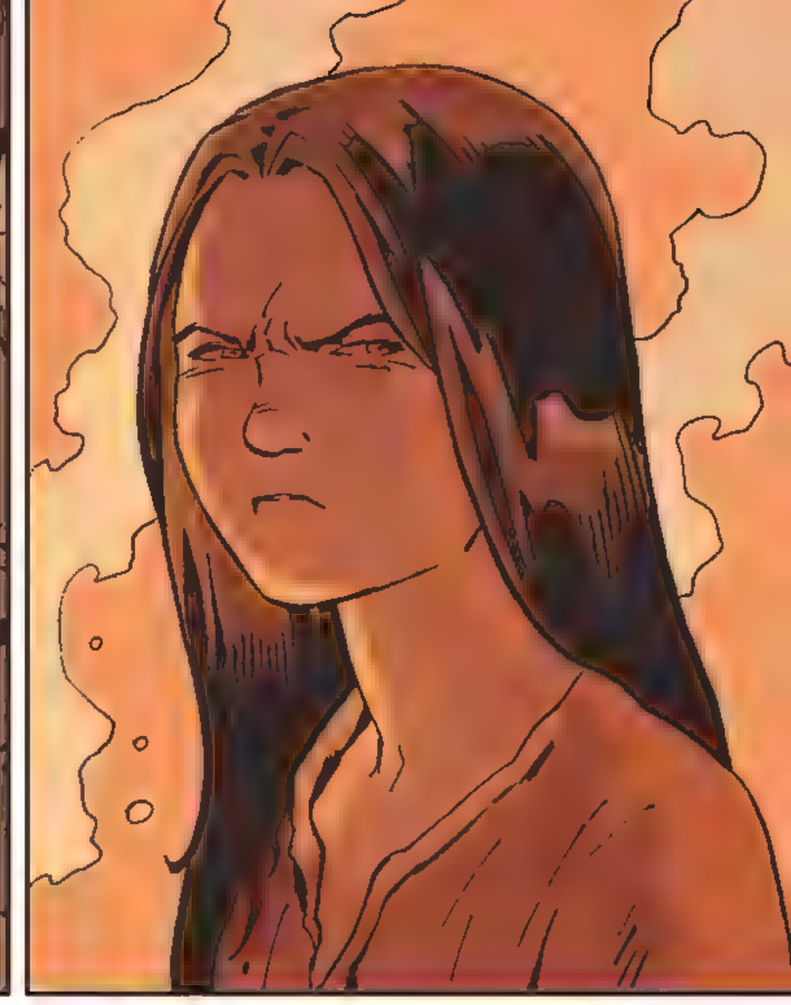
SHE'S MAD!

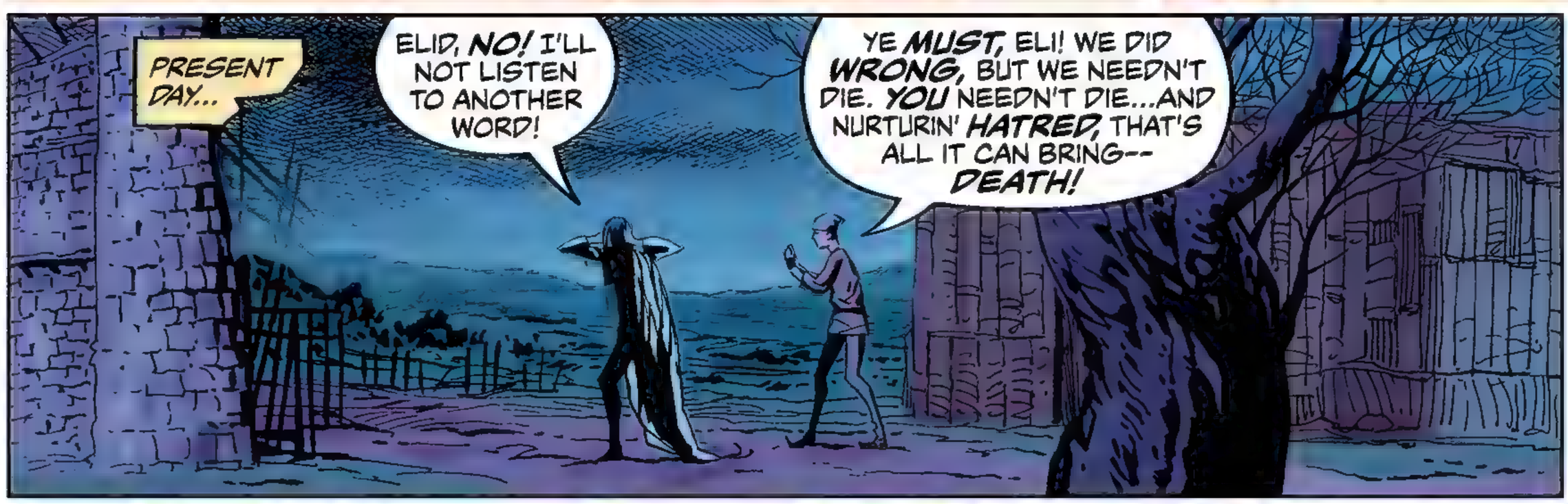
OH! RAGE HAS TAKEN HER!

'TWAS THE HUNGER DID IT!

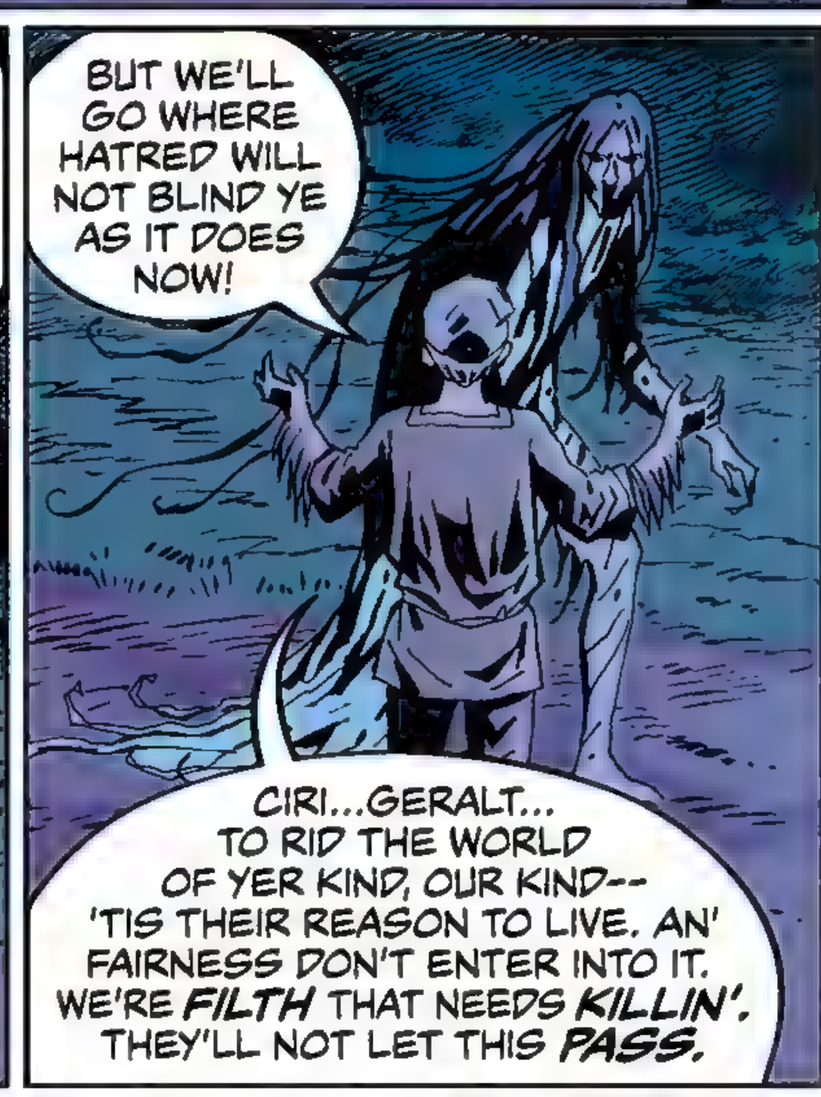
YE'LL *SHARE*, LASS. YE *WILL*.

WE MUST *LET* THE GIRL *FEED US*, EAT OF HER POT TO LIFT THE *WEIGHT* SHE BEARS. TAKE *NOTHIN'* ON YER OWN LEST YE *STEAL* HER GUILT FROM HER.




PRESENT DAY...
ELID, NO! I'LL NOT LISTEN TO ANOTHER WORD!
YE MUST, ELI! WE DID WRONG, BUT WE NEEDN'T DIE. YOU NEEDN'T DIE...AND NURTURIN' HATRED, THAT'S ALL IT CAN BRING-- DEATH!

YE MUST FLEE! GO AWAY. WE MUST-- BOTH!
WHERE OTHERS WON'T KNOW OUR WRONGS, WHERE WE WON'T KNOW THEM!
WE BROUGHT THE TROUBLE UPON OURSELVES, WE'LL FIND A WAY TO CAST IT OFF!


BUT WE'LL GO WHERE HATRED WILL NOT BLIND YE AS IT DOES NOW!
CIRI...GERALT... TO RID THE WORLD OF YER KIND, OUR KIND-- 'TIS THEIR REASON TO LIVE. AN' FAIRNESS DON'T ENTER INTO IT. WE'RE FILTH THAT NEEDS KILLIN'. THEY'LL NOT LET THIS PASS.

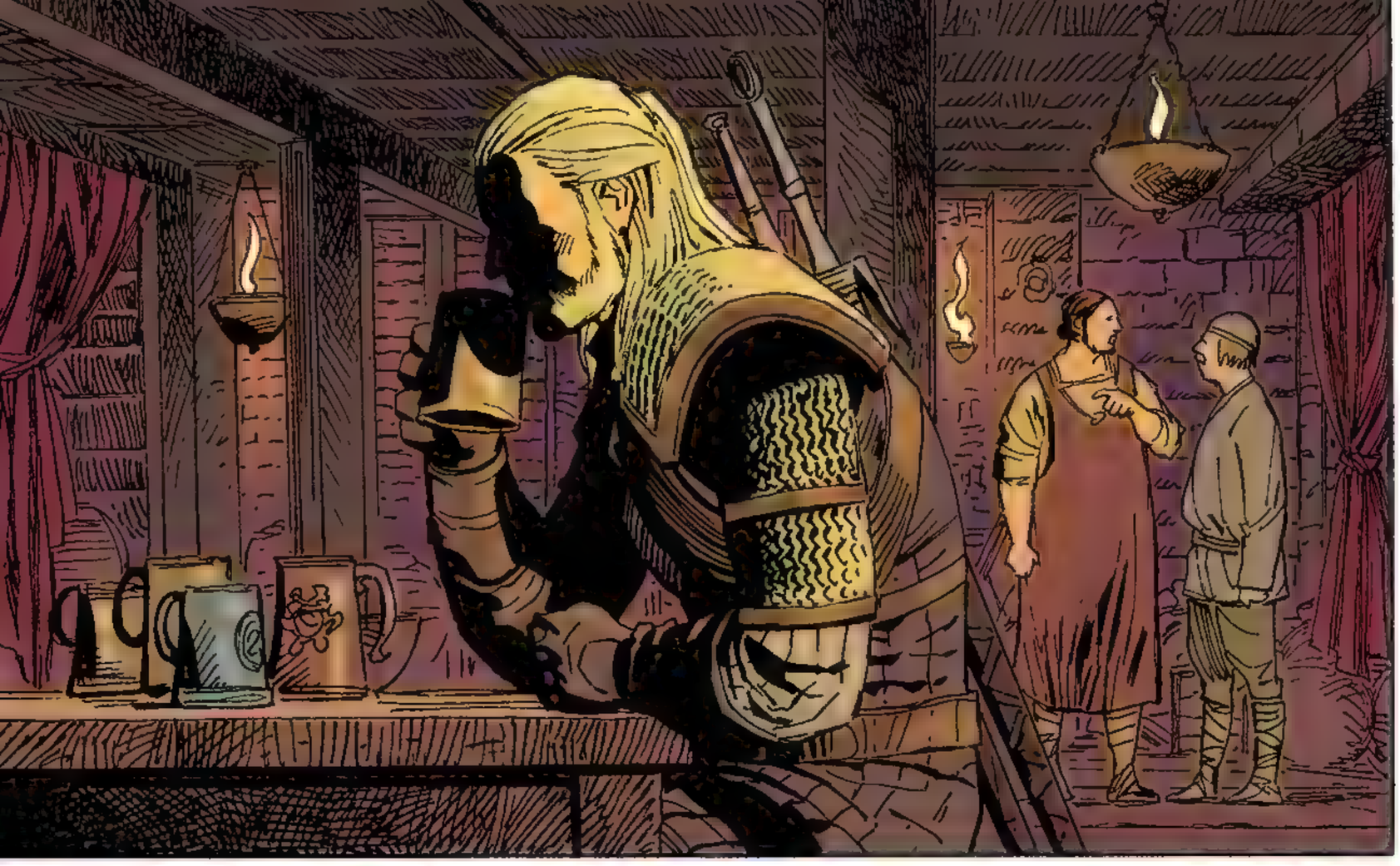
NOR WILL I.

YE'RE DAFT, ELI! YE SPOILT IT FOR US BOTH THOSE YEARS AGO. AN' YE'LL SPOIL IT AGAIN.
THAT MAN KILLED OUR FATHER!

I WILL SEE HIM DEAD! DEAD!
THERE'S NAUGHT I CAN DO TO HELP YOU! YE LOOK TO THE DEAD, ELI! YE SEEK DEATH!

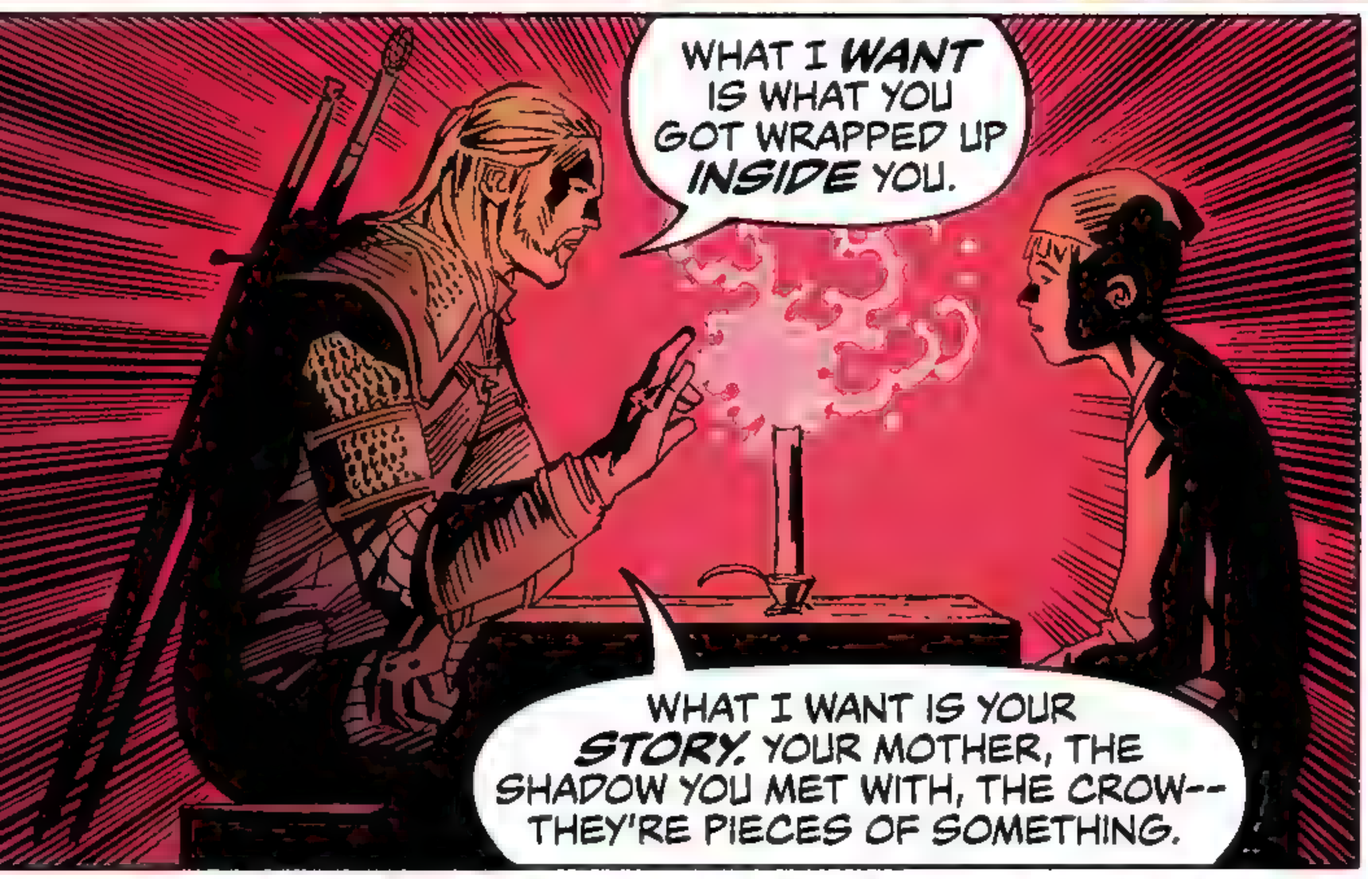
LOOK TO THE LIVIN', ELI! LOOK TO THE LIVIN'!

GRAOGAW



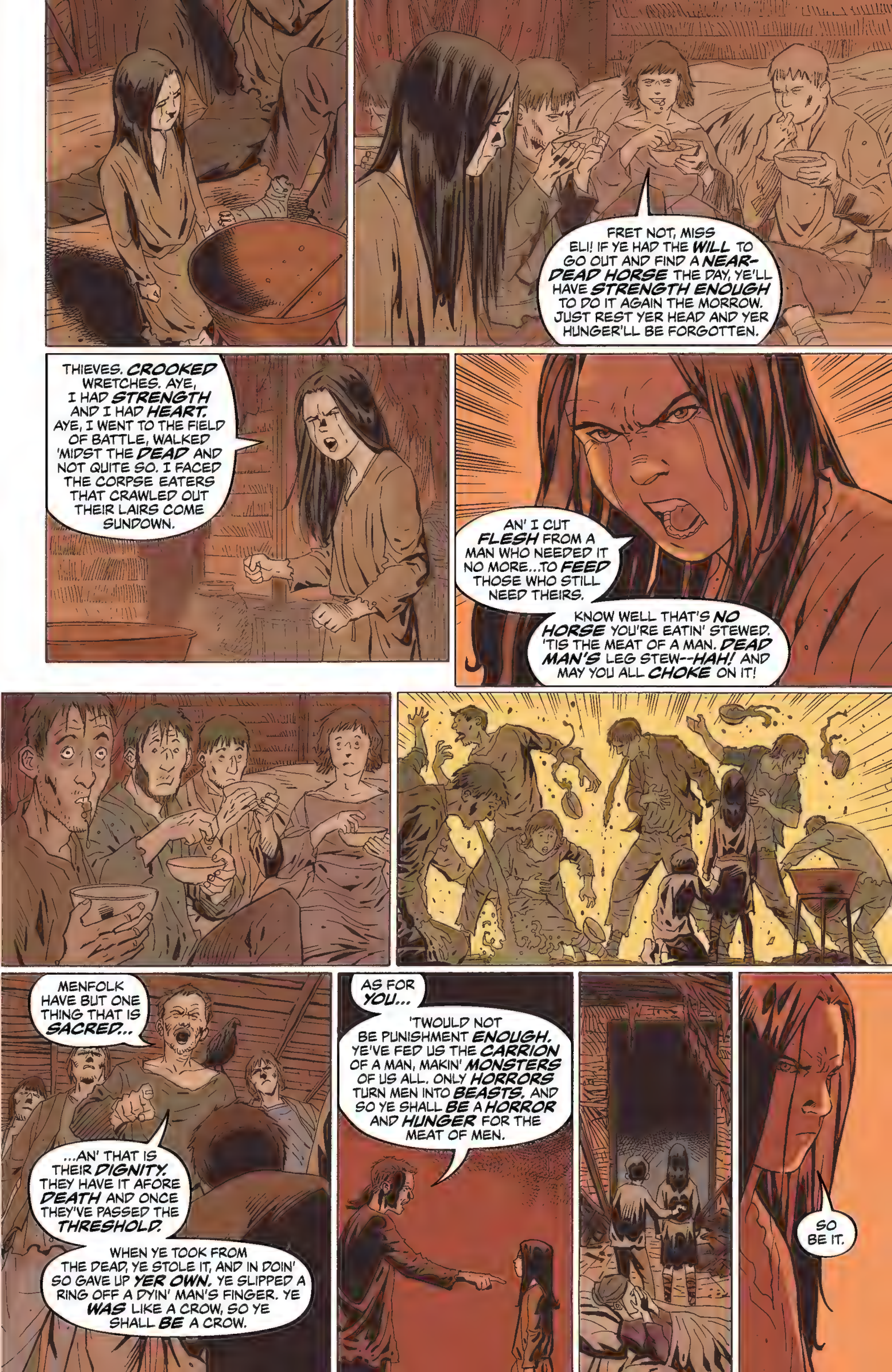
TAP
TAP
TAP

BIRD'S-EYE VIEW--KNOW THE PHRASE? FLY AROUND A LOT, ELID, DAY AND NIGHT. SEE PLENTY--THE ORDINARY, THE ODD. THING IS, I EXPECT NOT MUCH OF IT CONCERNS YOU.


WHAT I *WANT* IS WHAT YOU GOT WRAPPED UP *INSIDE* YOU.
WHAT I WANT IS YOUR *STORY.* YOUR MOTHER, THE SHADOW YOU MET WITH, THE CROW--THEY'RE PIECES OF SOMETHING.

GONNA FILL IN THE REST FOR ME, NOW. START *TALKING.*

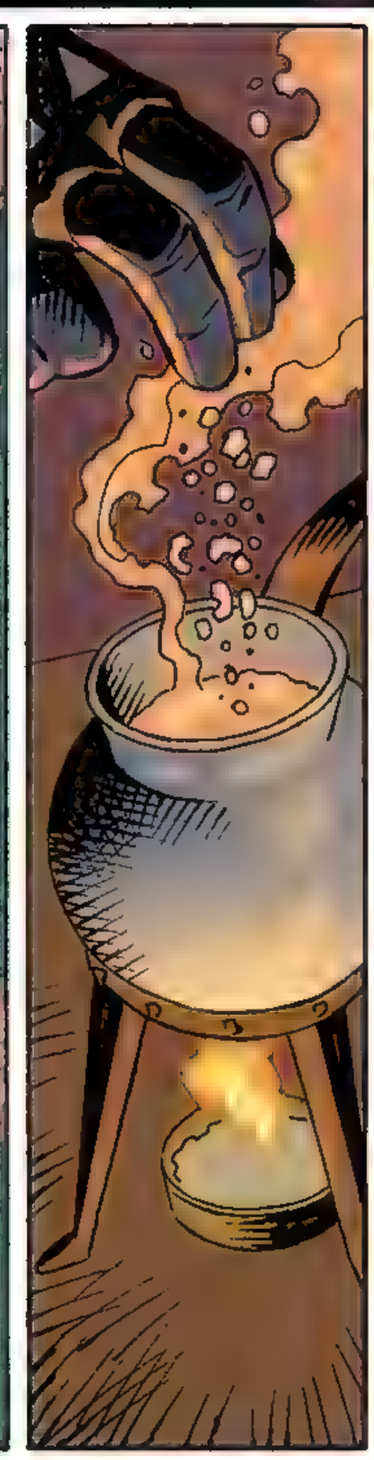
SO SHE FED 'EM THE STEW. CAN'T BE ALL. TELL ME EVERYTHING, TO THE END.
VERY WELL...

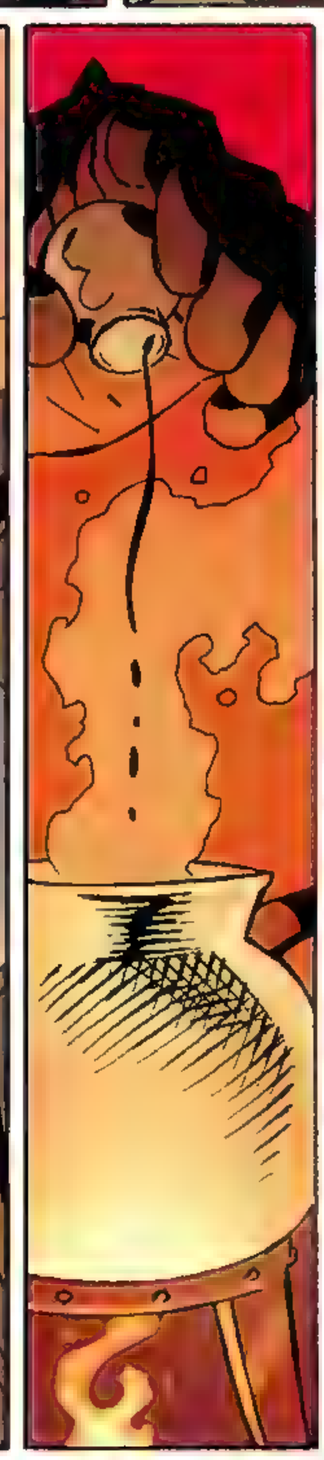

FRET NOT, MISS ELI! IF YE HAD THE WILL TO GO OUT AND FIND A NEAR-DEAD HORSE THE DAY, YE'LL HAVE STRENGTH ENOUGH TO DO IT AGAIN THE MORROW. JUST REST YER HEAD AND YER HUNGER'LL BE FORGOTTEN.
THIEVES. CROOKED WRETCHES. AYE, I HAD STRENGTH AND I HAD HEART. AYE, I WENT TO THE FIELD OF BATTLE, WALKED 'MIDST THE DEAD AND NOT QUITE SO. I FACED THE CORPSE EATERS THAT CRAWLED OUT THEIR LAIRS COME SUNDOWN.
AN' I CUT FLESH FROM A MAN WHO NEEDED IT NO MORE...TO FEED THOSE WHO STILL NEED THEIRS.
KNOW WELL THAT'S NO HORSE YOU'RE EATIN' STEWED. 'TIS THE MEAT OF A MAN. DEAD MAN'S LEG STEW--HAH! AND MAY YOU ALL CHOKE ON IT!
MENFOLK HAVE BUT ONE THING THAT IS SACRED...
...AN' THAT IS THEIR DIGNITY. THEY HAVE IT AFORE DEATH AND ONCE THEY'VE PASSED THE THRESHOLD.
WHEN YE TOOK FROM THE DEAD, YE STOLE IT, AND IN DOIN' SO GAVE UP YER OWN. YE SLIPPED A RING OFF A DYIN' MAN'S FINGER. YE WAS LIKE A CROW, SO YE SHALL BE A CROW.
AS FOR YOU...
'TWOULD NOT BE PUNISHMENT ENOUGH. YE'VE FED US THE CARRION OF A MAN, MAKIN' MONSTERS OF US ALL. ONLY HORRORS TURN MEN INTO BEASTS. AND SO YE SHALL BE A HORROR AND HUNGER FOR THE MEAT OF MEN.
SO BE IT.

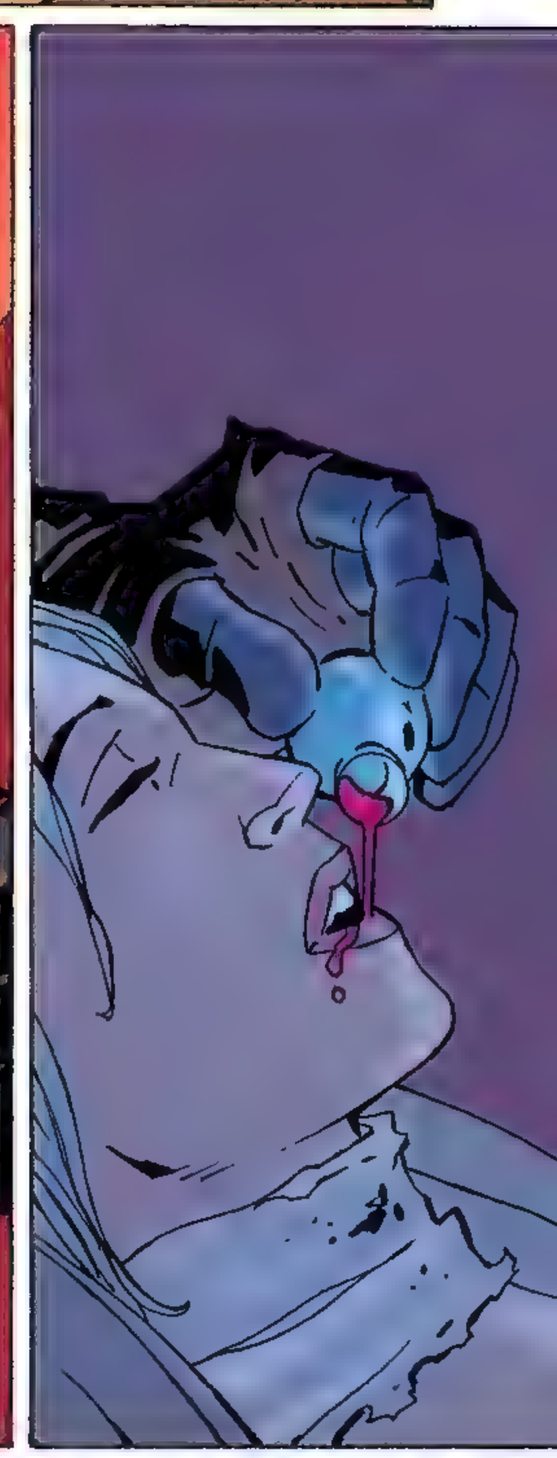
OH!

NOOO! WHADDAYA WANT FROM ME, WITCHER?! I WERE A KID, I DIDN'T DO NOTHIN'!

WELL, GONNA CHANGE THAT RIGHT NOW. 'CAUSE YOU'RE ABOUT TO HELP CIRI KICK HER FEVER.







ALL WE CAN DO NOW'S WAIT...

KOFF KOFF KAFF... AHEM.

HOW DO YOU FEEL?

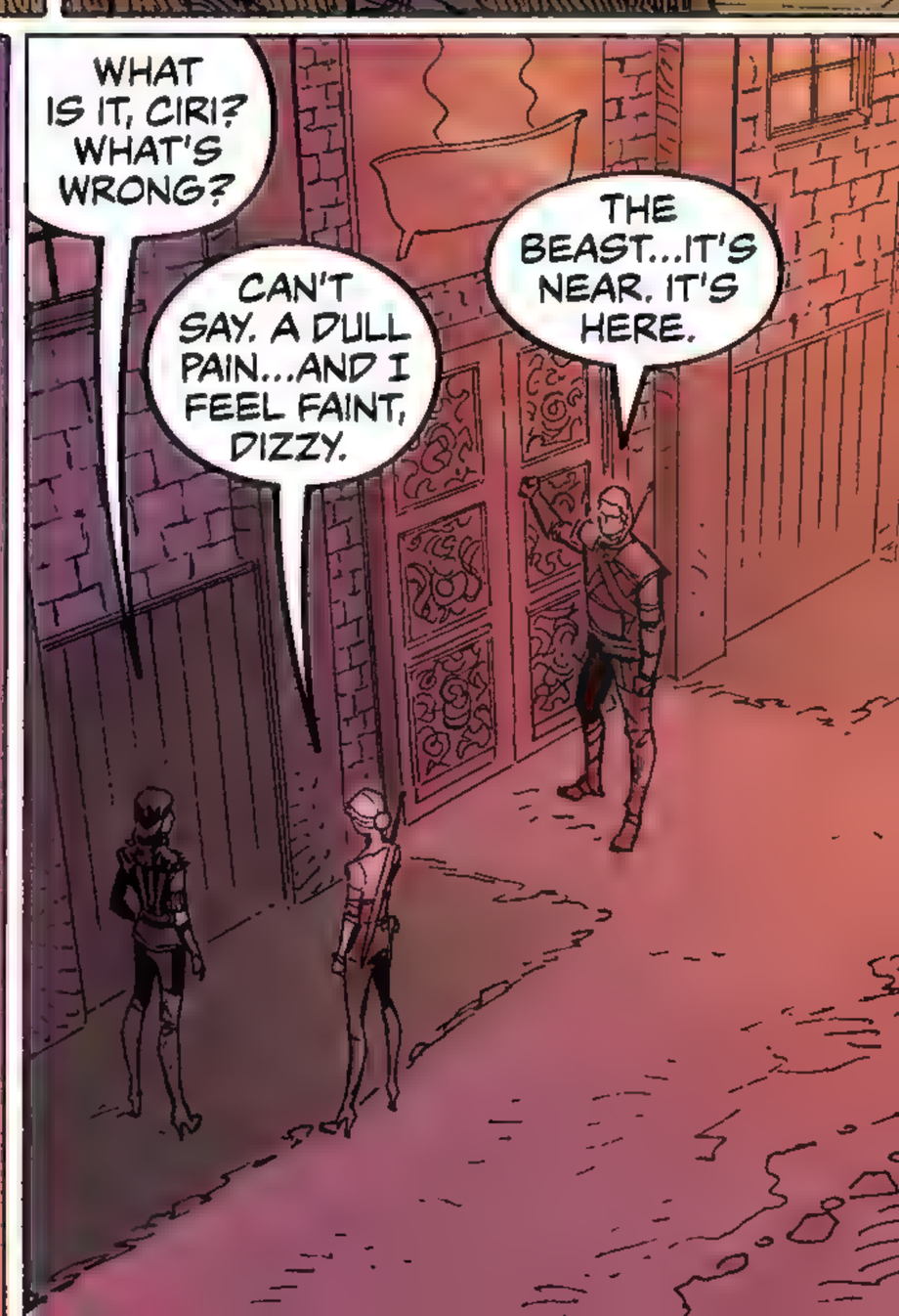
AS IF TRAMPLED UNDER BOOT BY THE SECOND NILFGAARDIAN ARMY ON THE MARCH TOWARD NOVIGRAD...BUT I BELIEVE I SHALL LIVE.

"NOT CLEAR OF DANGER YET. NEVER EASY WITH CURSES, THEIR CREATURES. NEVER SIMPLE. TAKE THE DAY TO REST. COME SUNDOWN, THOUGH...WE GOTTA FACE THIS HEAD ON."

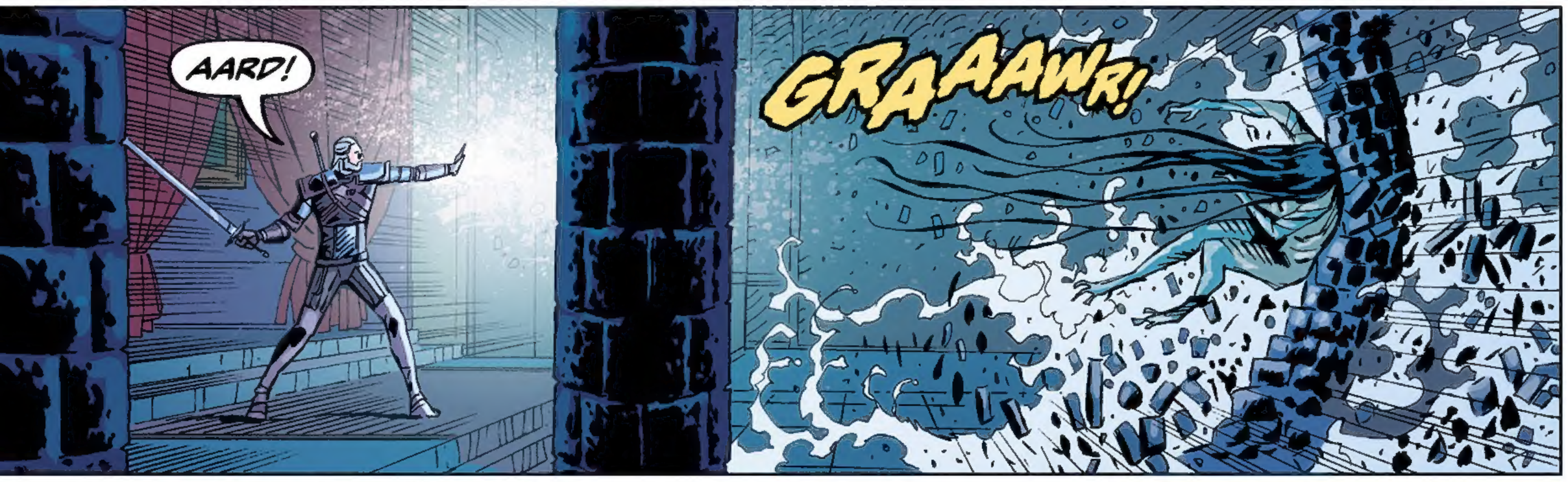
GERALT...THE WOUND SEEMED... INCURABLE, I TRIED MANY THINGS. IT RESISTED ALL. THE FEVER, THE ROT-- WAS IT A VENOM THAT CAUSED THEM?
COULD BE, BUT OF THE HUMAN VARIETY. HATRED, RAGE...THE VERY STUFF OF CURSES.

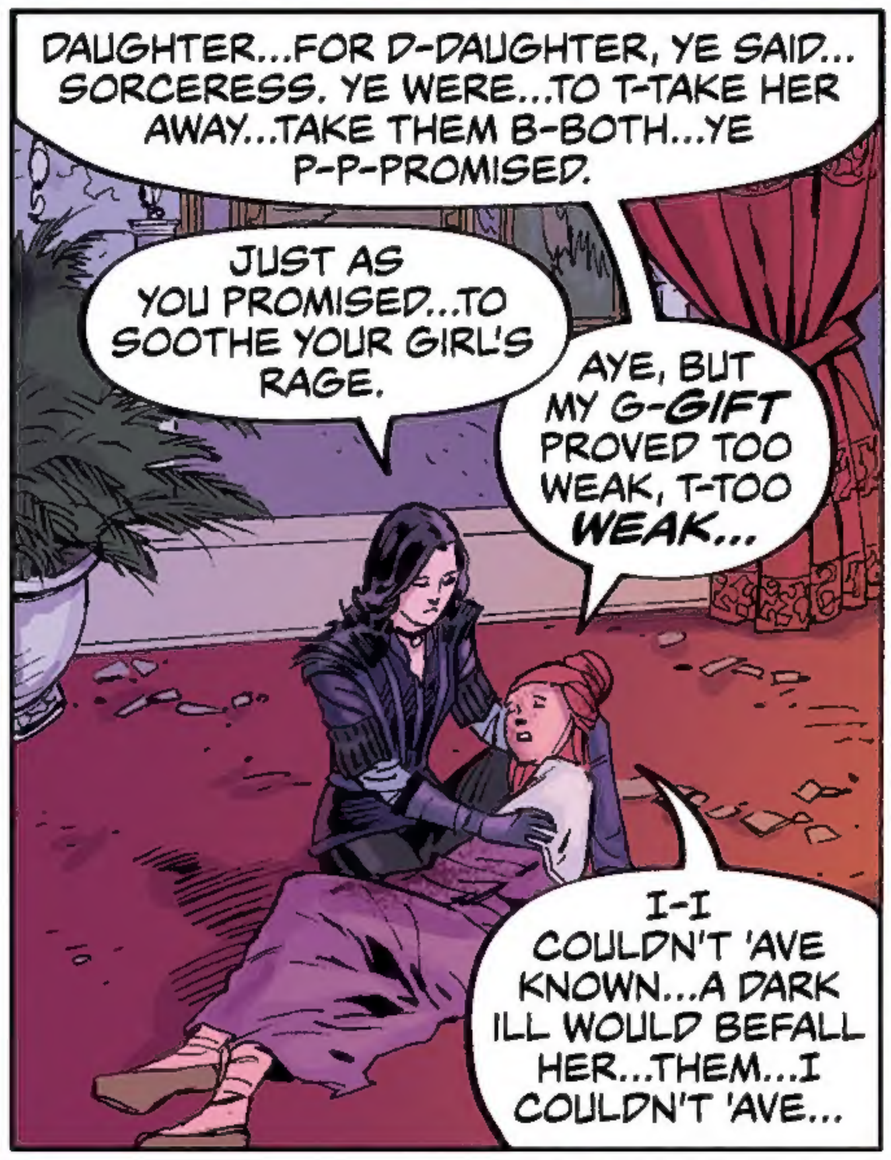
LATER...
MAERLINA-- THAT'S WHERE ALL THIS STARTED. THAT'S WHERE WE STAND TO END IT.

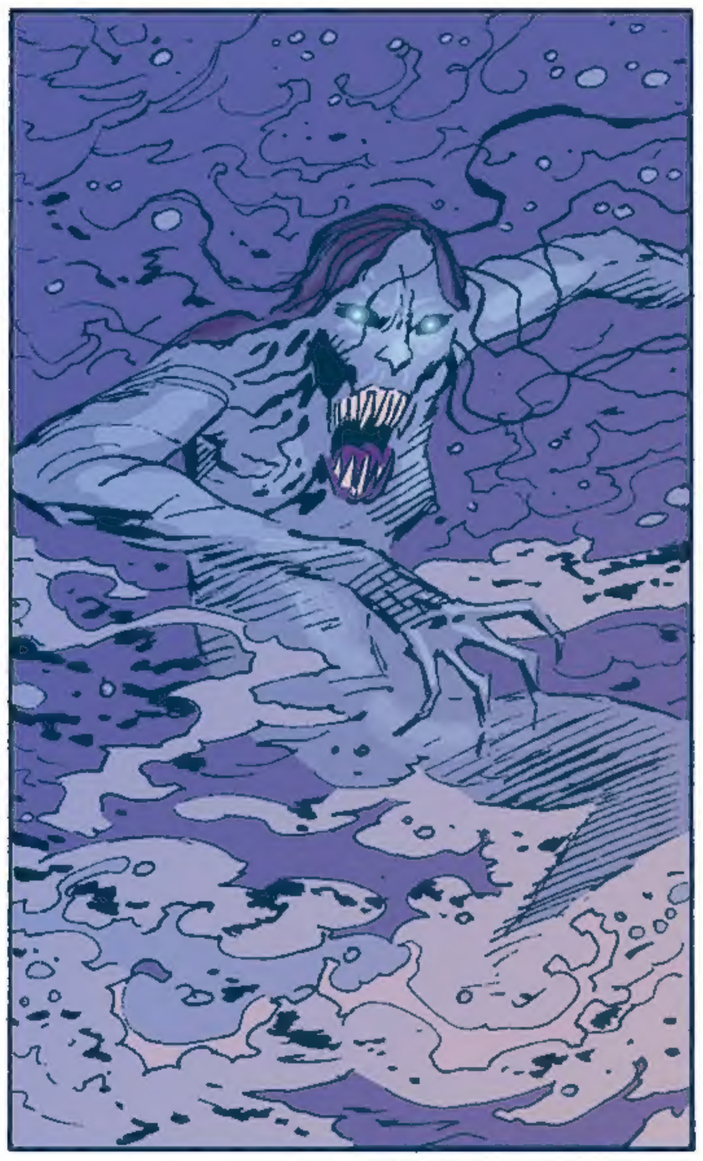
BAM BAM BAM

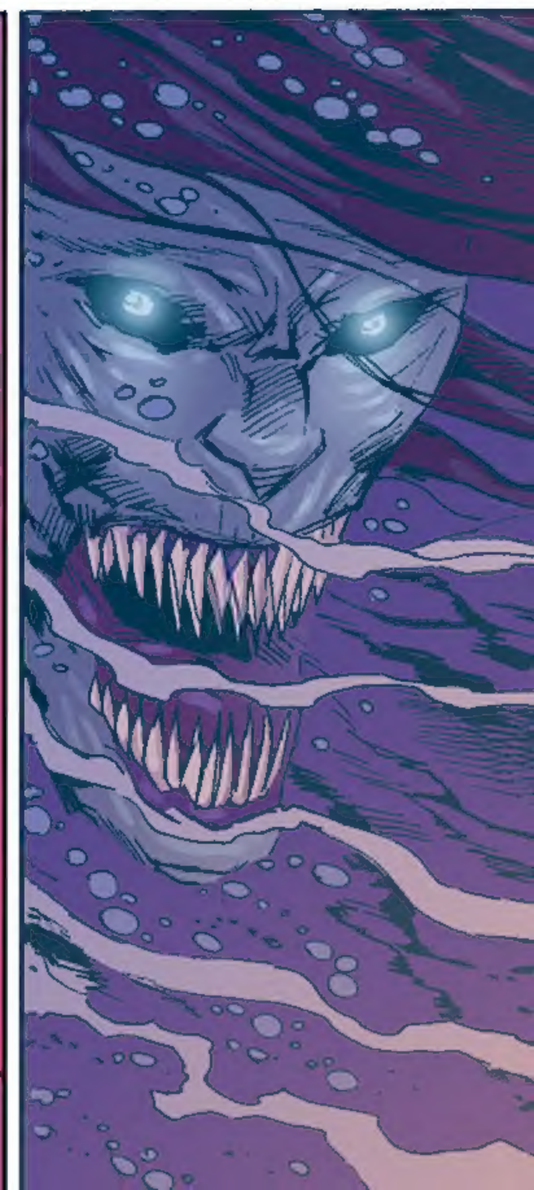

WHAT IS IT, CIRI? WHAT'S WRONG?
CAN'T SAY. A DULL PAIN...AND I FEEL FAINT, DIZZY.
THE BEAST...IT'S NEAR. IT'S HERE.

AT LAST, MY *HUNGER* WILL BE *SATED*. I'VE LONG AWAITED THIS. I'VE LONG AWAITED *YOU*.

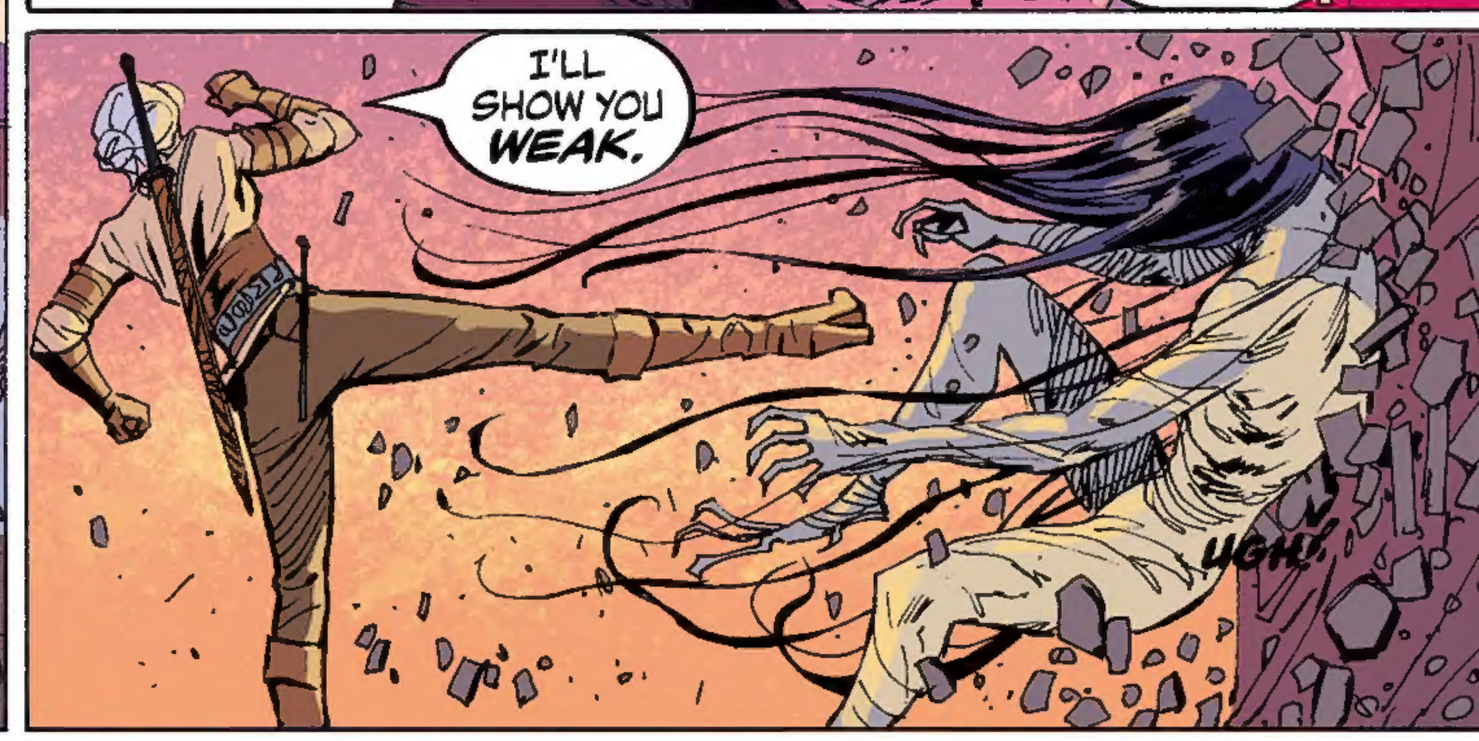








YOUR TRICKS CANNOT HOLD ME, WITCHER. I GROW STRONGER WITH EACH DEATH I BRING. DOUBT, COMPASSION...THEY WEAKEN YOU. AND YOUR CIRI--FEAR, FEAR OF ME WEAKENS HER.
THINK YOU KILL FOR A REASON? THINK THERE'S JUSTICE IN IT?
NOTHING COULD BE FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH. YOU'RE WRONG. DEAD WRONG.


I'LL SHOW YOU WEAK.
UGH!

HHRAAR!

YAAWW!

THUD

WITCHER... WON'T YOU SAVE ME? WON'T YOU LIFT MY CURSE AS YOU DID THAT OF YOUR PRINCESS?
NO...

YOU'RE TOO DAMNED FAR GONE...ALREADY WERE A GOOD WHILE BACK.

SOME DAYS LATER...

SO WHAT TYPE OF BEAST WAS ELISA?

TOUGH TO SAY. ***CURSED,*** THAT'S CERTAIN--BY FATE, CIRCUMSTANCE...

COME, NOW, GERALT. CURSES DON'T ISSUE FROM ***NOTHING***. FOLK ***FORGE*** THEM...FOR OTHERS, FOR THEMSELVES AT TIMES. AS YOU TOLD IT, ELISA WROUGHT HERS, THEN MADE A CHOICE, ***ACCEPTED*** IT.

NEVER THAT SIMPLE. HER FATHER'S DEATH, HER OWN PREDICAMENT--SHE SAW A ***LINK.*** WHO'S TO SAY THERE WASN'T ONE?

CURSES'RE TANGLES OF...WELL, SITUATIONS, FEELINGS, RELATIONSHIPS. GOTTA ADMIT--***GUT*** STILL CHURNS A BIT EVERY TIME I THINK OF ***ADDA.*** CURSES'RE ***DARK, DEADLY TANGLES*** THAT GROW, DRAW MORE AND MORE IN, AND ULTIMATELY ***DEVOUR.***

SO, DID MAERLINA BRING US TO NOVIGRAD UNDER ***FALSE PRETENSES?*** SET A SORT OF ***TRAP?***

NO IDEA, REALLY. BUT COULD'VE EASILY LOST HER WAY IN A TANGLE LIKE THAT.

I BELIEVE SHE MEANT WELL. ASSUMED YOU'D CHOOSE TO ***LIFT*** HER DAUGHTER'S CURSE--AND HER ***SON'S...***

POOR ELID... HE'S NOT SHOWN HIMSELF SINCE...IN EITHER FORM.

I DO HOPE HE'LL MANAGE.

KID'S GOT A HEART OF GOLD. BESIDES...DOGGED AND SCRAPPY AS A CROW AND A BOY. VENTURE TO SAY HE'LL BE ALL RIGHT. THOUGH HE'S LIKELY TO FIND ***HAPPINESS*** IN, WELL... ***STRANGE*** PLACES.

THE END

SON OF ULTRON